CLEVER TALES

By

Ludovic Halévy: Auguste Strindberg: Vsevolod Garshin: Villiers de L'Isle Adam: Alexander Kielland: Jakub Arbes.

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LUDOVIC HALÉVY, AUGUSTE STRINDBERG, VSEVOLOD GARSHIN, VILLIERS DE L'ISLE ADAM, ALEXANDER KIELLAND, JAKUB ARBES

Selected and Edited by
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The editors have translated *During the Riot*, *Love and Bread*, *The Love of the Natural*, *The Torture by Hope*, *The Phœnix*, *Milton's Daughters*, *The Elect of Dreams*, and *The Best Love;* while *Newton's Brain* and *Under a Bush of Lilacs* are translated by Josef Jiři Král, *Karen* by Thyge Sógård, and *Four Days* by Nathan Haskell Dole.

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DURING THE RIOT

NOTES OF AN OPERA-GOER

By Ludovic Halévy

Friday, June 11, 1870.

IT is a quarter after nine. They are playing "Faust." House full and brilliant: all the shoulders and all the diamonds of a Friday, which is the great day. Madame Carvalho is singing —

> "Ah! within the mirror there
> I smile to see myself so fair!"

* * *

I go out from the house into the flies. Here and there among the machinists and firemen the little peasant maidens are wandering about who are soon to dance Gounod's waltz in the kermesse. Mademoiselle G. comes up to me — very pretty with her coiffure of gold brocade, her blue woollen skirt, her little apron of white muslin with its bands of cherry, and, underneath, her ankles, which are charming.

"You are here," she says to me, "when you might go and see the riot?"

"I came away from it. I like 'Faust' better."

"Oh, 'Faust'! They play 'Faust' three times a week, while a riot — I saw it yesterday from a window at Menilmontant. Oh, how amused I was!"

At this moment up rushed Mademoiselle M.

"Oh, come, Marie; come quick! I have found a little window in the second story, in the property-room; no one is there, and one can see very well. Come quickly — you, too!"

They take flight gayly, and I follow them, threading the labyrinth of the stairways of the Opéra. The window was indeed very well situated, on the Rue Drouot, equally distant from the Boulevard des Italiens and the Mayoralty house of the ninth district.

The boulevard black as ink, a forest of heads, carriages at a footpace, hosts of white blouses, not one policeman. Suddenly a great surging in this immense throng: it is a regiment of cavalry coming up slowly from the Madeleine. They pass, and the heavy tramp of five hundred horse is heard on the macadam. Helmets and breastplates shine like silver. The regiment withdraws,

and behind the soldiers the flood of people and carriages falls in again.

The two little dancing-girls prattle on in the gayest manner —

"Hark! They are going to sing the 'Marseillaise' soon — 'Aux armes, citoyens!' Only they don't know it very well. The other evening, after dinner, papa, mamma, and my brother sang it — the 'Marseillaise.' Oh, they know it; that was much better!"

"The cavalrymen — they were cavalry?" rejoins the other, who seems to care very little about the "Marseillaise."

"Yes; they were cavalry."

"But then La R —— was there among them?"

"No; he is no longer in the cavalry. He has entered the empress's dragoons."

Great outcry on the boulevard side — "The 'Marseillaise'!" They sing the "Marseillaise." We listen. Then silence.

"How droll everything is!" says G. Then, turning toward me, "Ah! do you know, on the 17th — Thursday the 17th" —

"What is Thursday the 17th? What is there to be on Thursday the 17th?"

"Oh! my appearance — my first appearance at the École Lyrique. I play!"

"What are you going to play?"

"The rôle of Madame de Bryas."

"In what piece?"

"How! in what piece?"

"Well, yes; the title of the piece."

"The title of the piece? Ah! that I don't know. All that I know is that I play Madame de Bryas, and that I shall have a blue gown. You are going to take a box for me; it will cost only twenty francs."

I take the box and give the twenty francs.

On the boulevard the crowd increases, increases still, ever increases. Cries, shouts, songs, and hisses have full vent.

I hear at the same time what goes on in the street and on the stage. They have just recalled Madame Carvalho and Faure after the cathedral scene. In the theatre, applause; behind the scenes, cries of the call-boys, "Clear the stage! clear the stage!"

At the same time, great hubbub in the Rue Drouot. The door of the Mayoralty opens, and we see a whole little army holding itself jammed in, infantry and cavalry, within the court of the old Hôtel Aguado. Clarion calls, rolling of drums, orders. A squad of policemen come out of the Mayoralty and try to clear the Rue Drouot. The crowd gives way slowly, slowly, when all at once out of the great door of the Mayoralty darts on the trot, suddenly throwing itself on the

boulevard, a squadron of city guards. The big horses of the municipal guard are admirable in this evolution. Not a slip, not a fault, in passing out thus at a great pace, under these heavy cavalrymen, from the court pavement to the asphalt of the street.

And during all this evolution, from the open windows of the Opéra the Soldiers' Chorus soars out at full height:

> "Honor undying
> Of our great sires
> Feed we, supplying
> Life through death's fires."

Two companies of foot, sword-bayonets at the ends of their guns, follow the horsemen on a run; then after the foot comes a squadron of blue hussars. Ah, the poor little Arab horses! They are not, like the good, patient steeds of the city guards, wonted to crowds and uproar. They understand nothing of what is going on. They come out leaping and curvetting, furious, frightened, startled, prancing, pawing, kicking, running against and over each other. The hussars disappear in a vortex of enormous manes and long tails flying the wind.

"Ah, how pretty it is — how amusing!" cry my little comrades.

They were right. It was charming.

* * *

In the court of the Mayoralty, on the pavement, the little Arabs hold good, and leap like madmen without losing their equilibrium. But out on the asphalt they slip, slide; four horses fall — one drags another down; all roll in a heap with their riders pell-mell. The crowd utters a great cry. The policemen precipitate themselves in the midst. The poor hussars must be crushed, pulverized. Not at all. The four little Arabs are already on their legs and the four riders in the saddle. For the moment one can hold no more. One forgets everything — the riot, Rochefort, and the "Marseillaise;" one sees nothing but the spectacle, and applauds it.

After the hussars, a squad of policemen, then again horseguards, footguards, again a squadron of hussars, and again and all the time policemen. It all passes like a hurricane, and launches on the boulevard in two columns — one taking the right toward the Madeleine, the other the left toward the Bastille. When all have disappeared, chasing the crowd and leaving emptiness behind them, like a piston in a pump, the Rue Drouot is deserted, the boulevard deserted, and Monsieur Perrin's soldiers finish Gounod's chorus:

"And under thy wing,
Soldiers victorious,
Lead thou our steps; our hearts feel thee over us!"

The doors of the Mayoralty close. Prolonged confused murmurs come to us from the boulevard. It is the crowd scattering and fleeing away before the troops. Little by little the noises die away, die out. A great stillness follows; and little G. cries out —

"On my word, we shall never be ready for the fifth act."

They go off on a run, and after five minutes I have stared long enough at the street, now absolutely empty and silent.

* * *

I descend to the theatre. In the flies I stop near two of the chorus: one, helmet on head, cuirass upon his shoulders, leans back against a door; the other, with battlemented cap, coat of mail, and slashed doublet, rests upon a ponderous sword for two hands.

"For all that," says one, "it is not going to be very convenient to get out to Belleville to-night. I hope this will cure you of voting for Rochefort."

"Me? Not at all. I will vote for him again."

"And why so?"

"Because that will worry the Government, and because it would be amusing to see him in the Chamber of Deputies."

"And then we shall have riots and revolutions."

"Oh! as to that there is no danger."

"How! No danger?"

"No, no. I vote for Rochefort. I hope he will come back. But if, once returned, he tries to play the rogue too far, the Government will soon bring him to reason. Oh, it is solid, the Government; that is why you can worry it!"

Upon this profound reasoning the man in the coat of mail went away, after shouldering his two-handed sword.

I went away also. I entered the dancing-hall. Scarcely anybody. Monsieur Auber slept in a corner, seated on a red bench before the great mirror which has reflected so many pirouettes, so many salutes, sallies, cuts; Mademoiselle Baratte, with one foot on the floor and the other planted on the hand-rail, talked with Monsieur L. Mademoiselle Beaugrand made little wheels on one leg gravely in the middle of the room. A few black coats wandered among the fair Trojans and Nubians.

* * *

I return to my little window. The look of

street and boulevard is changed. In the street, before the Mayoralty, a hundred policemen. Among them two drummers of the Paris guard and a police commissioner, sash-crossed. On the boulevard a considerable gathering of people. At the entrance of the Rue Drouot the policemen look at the mob and the mob look at the policemen. From time to time a cat-call, or a cheer for Rochefort.

At a command the policemen put themselves in motion, and, preceded by the commissioner and the two drummers, go up to the boulevard. Three rolls of the drums. The groups, without dispersing, draw farther off, and keep at a distance. After the third roll the policemen advance, and five minutes afterward begin the filing off of the arrested people — rioters or the inquisitive, but without doubt more of them inquisitive than rioters. Those of the policemen who had followed a losing hunt and returned empty-handed wear a sheepish and confused look as they defile before the commissioner on their return.

Many prisoners, many curious scenes, distressing or ludicrous: "But I did nothing at all, Monsieur, — I did nothing; I went back home." "My God! my poor wife, who is waiting for me. I went to the Rue Vivienne

on an errand," etc. One brave fellow, who bore a great packet under his right arm and a little white dog under his left, cried out in a lamentable voice, "But I would not have carried all this to make a riot!" Five minutes later he was put at liberty, himself, his packet, and his dog. A young man in an overcoat and a waiter try to resist, and immediately are thrown violently into the court of the Hôtel. A band of thirty prisoners defile thus before me, and are all shut within the door of the Mayoralty. I light a cigar, and hear behind me Valentine's curse falling upon Marguerite. The fourth act is ended.

* * *

My two little dancers return — G. dressed as a Nubian, M. as a Trojan. Behold them ready for the ballet.

"We have ten minutes yet before the dance," says G. to me. "Do they still sing the 'Marseillaise'?"

"No; they sing no more."

We are all three at the window — I black-coated, with white cravat, M., the Trojan, with her little Phrygian bonnet and blue silk tights under a skirt of white crape; and G., the Nubian, with her sphinx coiffure of red and gold, and her long white tunic and scarlet trousers.

Up comes my friend Z. He has come across the boulevard. A saying of a bourgeois has delighted him. This bourgeois went very respectfully to find the police commissioner.

"Pardon, Monsieur the Commissary, at which summons to disperse are you?"

"At the first, sir."

Whereupon the bourgeois returns to say to his wife —

"He is only at the first summons. We can remain a little while longer."

On the boulevard and in the street all is ready for a new sally. One by one the policemen, disembarrassed of their prisoners, leave the Mayoralty. Then at the corner of the street, on the boulevard, groups form again quietly, and, one must say, very stupidly. They begin again to gaze at the policemen. The fish returning in crowds to the same spot where the filet had just been caught! I guessed well enough what would soon come, and I had — I, between my Nubian and my Trojan — a foolish wish to go and ask these idiots what pleasure they found in contemplating that squad of policemen. The riot of curiosity, in all its imprudence and silliness, was revealed to me.

Things followed a perfectly regular course: By the time the hundred police, the two

drummers, and the commissioner with his scarf were all together again in front of the Mayoralty door, a fine mob was collected on the boulevard which asked nothing more than to be dispersed and pursued.

It was done, after the three regulation drum-rolls.

The Trojan and the Nubian were charmed at first with this little spectacle: The drums, the crowd in flight, the policemen launched on a grand trot down the boulevard, — all that was very delightful to them. But the military piece suddenly turned into huge melodrama. The second batch of prisoners was infinitely less peaceable and resigned than the first. Resistance as well as submission is contagious. The fray began in front of a wine-merchant's shop, which alone remained open between the boulevard and the Rue Rossini. A very young man, bareheaded, his gray coat torn, fell on the sidewalk, and when the police would have picked him up he made a fierce defence with hands and feet. Wrath soon reached the little troop of prisoners, and for some instants it was a violent brawl. Hats, caps, and cocked hats rolling to earth, swords wrenched from their scabbards, clothes in tatters, cries, oaths, curses; one woman above them all, with piercing clamor, threw herself full into the

fight, catching hold of the policemen and trying to tear from their hold a man in a blouse, who, for his part, fought with all his force, and gave as many blows as he received. The police held him by the blouse, and his shirt, pulled out from his trousers, showed the bare abdomen and hairy chest. A vague remembrance of the barricades and the Morgue! Around this rabid struggle the crowd cries, hoots, howls, and hisses the police.

* * *

"Let us go away! Let us go away!" said M. and G. at the same time. "Come quickly; come with us! Don't stay there — it is frightful!"

I let myself be dragged away, my heart leaping in my breast a little.

In the lobby we meet the second manager of the dance.

"Ah! What are you doing, young ladies? Everybody is on the boards for the ballet. You are late."

They escape, running. I cross the side-scenes mechanically; passing out by the door of communication from the stage to the audience-room, I go and sit down in the orchestra stalls — my usual seat.

I think I was never seized by a stranger or more violent contrast. I find myself in that

magnificent, ostentatious hall of the Opéra. My neighbors of every evening are there, my friends M. and V. at my right and left. "Why do you come so late?" asks M. I do not reply. Madame De S., from the depth of her box, smiles upon me in the most charming way. On the stage, in the clouds, witches gallop by on broomsticks. Mephistopheles invites Faust to come

> "At the feast of dames of race
> And of courtesans take place,"

and the mountain, opening, reveals a resplendent palace; floods of light deluge the hall; sixty beautiful girls descend from the back of the stage, and begin to dance to the most delicate and voluptuous strains.

After that brutal and disgusting spectacle, after those cries and howls, after those blouses and tatters, without transition, twenty steps away, at the same minute, the most delicate and sensuous of sights, this sparkling hall, all full of elegance and harmony, — which was the dream, which the reality?

* * *

And at the same moment I see again distinctly, as if it were before my eyes, Delacroix's picture — "Liberty on the Barricades of 1830." This woman, standing on a mound

of stones and corpses, a gun in one hand and the tricolor in the other; beside her, crying "Long live the Republic!" the heroic boy, gray with powder, pistol in hand, the long shoulder-belt of the national guard flying at his heels; and this workman, with the blue blouse and the red cap, who, lying flat on the ground, lifts himself with great difficulty and dies gazing at Liberty; in the background, Paris in the smoke of powder and under the lowering July sun of 1830.

Ah, well! I am awaiting something like that, with less of its grandeur and more of its horror. At every instant it seems to me that I shall see it appear among these amiable silk-clad people, with their flowers and diamonds, coming to claim its place at the feast of dames and courtesans, — the pallid man of the streets, torn, bruised, dirty, clothed in a blouse of white, and holding in his hand, instead of the tricolor, a singular red flag made of a broomstick and a petticoat.

* * *

A quarter of an hour afterward, while the drumming and summoning continues in the Rue Drouot, the exit of the audience from the Opéra was made with all its wonted elegance and splendor. The grand Parisian dames slowly descended the steps of the hall

stairways, and the footmen made the carriages draw up in file beneath the great awning of the theatre.

I meet the Director of the Opéra, Monsieur Émile Perrin.

"Bad receipts," I say to him, "with this rioting?"

"Better than ever!" he replies.

LOVE AND BREAD

By Auguste Strindberg

FALK, the Royal Secretary, was certainly not informed as to the market-price of grain when he rode out to the Major's to ask his daughter's hand.

"I love Louisa," began the Secretary.

"How much do you earn?" asked the old man.

"Barely twelve hundred crowns. But we love each other so dearly, dear uncle!"

"That does not concern me. Twelve hundred crowns is not enough."

"I have some extra work besides. Louisa knows my heart."

"Don't speak so childishly! How much do you earn by this extra work?"

"We met first at Boo, on the island Lidingö."

"How much do you earn outside?" said the Major, gesticulating with his lead-pencil as if he would stab him with it.

"And our feelings, which" —

"How much do you earn outside!" The Major began to scrawl something on his blotting-paper.

"Oh! that surely will not fail, if we only first" —

"Will you answer me or not? How much do you earn outside? Figures are what I want — figures and facts."

"I make translations at ten crowns the folio. I give French lessons, too; and proof-reading is promised me."

"Promises are not facts. Figures, my young man, figures. So! I put it down. How much translating have you to do?"

"How much? Ah, indeed, that I cannot precisely say!"

"What! You cannot? You have translating to do, as you just said. Will you not tell me what it is?"

"I am translating Guizot's 'History of Civilization,' twenty-five folios thick, into Swedish."

"Ten crowns the folio makes all together two hundred and fifty crowns. And then!" —

"Then — then — that no one can say beforehand."

"How? One cannot know beforehand? But one should know exactly. You think that marriage is only in order to pass time as

pleasantly as possible! No, my young man. In a year come the children; and children must have food and clothing."

"But the children do not always come so immediately; when one loves as we love" —

"How the devil do you love, then?"

"How do we love each other?" At this he laid his hand on his heart and rolled his eyes.

"Do not the children come 'when one loves as you do,' you rascal? Indeed, that is delicious! Yet you are a good-enough sort of a fellow, and so I say you may be betrothed. Make use of your engagement time, though, so that you earn something, for hard times are facing us. The price of wheat is going up."

Secretary Falk became quite red in the face as he heard this conclusion, yet his joy at attaining Louisa was so great that he was moved to kiss the old man's hand. God in heaven, how happy he was! And how happy his Louisa! As they walked for the first time on the street arm in arm, every one looked at them. You would suppose that every one halted to form a guard of honor for their triumphal procession. On they swept, with glances uplifted proudly.

In the evening he came to her. They sat

themselves down in the middle of the drawing-room and read proof. The old man thought he was a capable fellow; and when the work was done the bridegroom said to the bride, "Now we have earned three crowns!" A kiss sealed the deed. But on the next evening they went to the theatre and rode home. That cost ten crowns. Sometimes when he had evening lessons to give — what does one not do for love? — he excused himself from the lessons and went to his Louisa. Then they went out and took a walk. The wedding day drew near; all was different then. They betook themselves to the Brunkeberger Place, to choose furniture. They began with the most important. Louisa did not wish to be present when the beds were being bought; but as it turned out she went, all the same. They must be of walnut — each piece of solid walnut. And they must have red-bordered mattresses, with springs, of course, and the pillows filled with eider-down. Each must have its especial eider-down quilt, too. Louisa wanted a blue one, because she was blond. Then they went to the house-furnisher. First, of course, they chose a red-shaded night-lamp and a bisque Venus; then table service of every variety; fine knives and forks, a couple of dozen; and cut-glass, with a monogram. At last in their turn came

the kitchen dishes, and in that mamma must help. Dear God! what had not the poor bridegroom to do: Making out checks, running to the bank, going after workmen, looking up houses, and putting up curtains. He became in arrears with his work. Once he was married, however, he would make all that up. So he thought. They would only rent two rooms to start with. They had resolved to be "reasonable." And if it were only two rooms, they could furnish them so much more prettily. So he found a dwelling of two rooms, with kitchen and pantry, in the Regierung Strasse, on the first floor, for six hundred crowns. When Louisa let fall the remark that she would just as lief have three rooms and a kitchen on the fourth floor, he grew embarrassed. But what mattered it when one was fond of another? Louisa thought so too, finally. The rooms were soon furnished. The bedroom was like a little temple. The beds stood near each other like two chariots in which life's journey was to be made. And the sun shone on the blue coverlid, the snow-white sheets, and the pillows with their monograms embroidered by an old aunt. These were large letters of brier-rose, intertwined as if in embrace, and whenever they met in a knot they kissed each other. A little alcove was arranged for the wife, with a

Japanese screen, and in the drawing-room, which was dining-room, study, and reception-room as well, stood her upright piano, which had cost twelve hundred crowns. There also was his writing-desk of old walnut, a large plate-glass mirror, sofa, reading-table, and dining-table. It looked as if people who could lead a comfortable and cosey life lived there.

At last came the wedding! It was on a Saturday evening. Thereupon followed Sunday morning. What a life! Oh, how delightful it is to be married! What a glorious invention marriage is! Then one may do what he pleases. Then come the brothers and sisters to make their congratulations.

In the morning at nine o'clock the bedroom was still dark. The young groom did not wish to open the shutters yet. He lighted the red lamp again, and threw its magical light on the blue coverlid and upon the somewhat rumpled white sheets. The bisque Venus stood saucy and inviting in the rosy glow. There lay the pretty young wife, so delightfully languid, and as happy as if this were the first night of her life in which she had slept well. No wagons were to be heard on the streets, for the day was Sunday, and the bells rang so cheerily, so joyfully, as if they would call all mankind together to give

thanks that man and wife were created. He whispered in her ear. She should turn over, so that he could go out and order breakfast. She buried her little head in the pillows, while he went behind the screen in order to put on the absolutely necessary things. He entered the drawing-room, where the sun threw a broad beaming ray upon the floor. At first, for a moment, he did not know whether it were spring, summer, autumn, or winter. He only knew that it was Sunday. His bachelor days seemed to him like a dark shadow from which he had escaped, and in his new dwelling he breathed the breath of his old home and his future family. Oh, how strong he felt! His future loomed up before him like a tottering hill. He threw himself against it: it broke in sand beneath his feet, and he set forward upon his way over chimney and housetop with his pure young bride in his arms.

Then he picked up his clothes lying scattered on the floor; his white cravat he found perched on a picture-frame, like a butterfly. He went into the kitchen. Oh, how splendidly the new copper utensils glimmered and glistened! And the tin cooking-kettles! All that belonged to him and to her! He called the cook. She received the direction to order a breakfast from the "Restau-

rant of the Three Romans" at once. It must be fine. The host already knew; she need only tell him.

He returned then to the bedroom door and knocked. "May I come?" A little shriek; then, "No, my love; wait just a minute." Now he lays the table himself. When the breakfast came he filled the new plates, he folded the napkins beautifully, and wiped the wineglasses. The bridal bouquet paraded in front of his wife's plate. And now out she comes in her embroidered morning-gown, and the sunbeams meet her. She is a little faint, only a little, so he pushes her in an easy-chair up to the table. Quick! a little Kümmel in a liqueur glass; a bit of bread with caviare. That helps. Oh, how glorious! One may do everything one chooses, if one is but married. Only to think what mamma would say if she saw her daughter drinking schnapps! He waits on her, runs and springs as if he still were her betrothed. But the breakfast after such a night! And no one had the right to criticise him! Often enough already had he had such breakfasts. But what a difference! Discontent, restlessness, he puts behind him; and as he drank a glass of real porter with his oysters he could not despise bachelors enough. Only think of the stupid men who do not marry! Such egoists should

be taxed, like dogs. The young wife ventured to demur, yet as gently and lovingly as possible, that the poor fellows who do not wish to marry are rather to be pitied. If they could, surely they would, all of them. That gave the Secretary a little stab at the heart. He became meditative for a moment. He had been so overflowing with spirits. All his happiness was based on a question of economics. And when — when — Bah! A glass of Burgundy. Work will soon begin. Then we shall see. Next comes the roast pheasant, and with it delicious cranberries and cucumbers.

The young wife, a little concerned about the luxurious meal, laid her trembling hand upon his arm and said, "Dear heart! can we allow ourselves that?" Luckily she said "we."

"One day is not every day," he replied. "Herring and potatoes we can eat later, and often enough."

"Do you really eat herring and potatoes?"

"Well, I should think so."

"Yes, when you have been out and come in with a heavy head; and a beefsteak à la Chateaubriand follows."

"Do not talk about it. Your health! That was faultless, that pheasant, and such artichokes!"

"No, Gustave; you are quite reckless. Artichokes at this time of year! What will that cost?"

"Are they not good? That is the main point. And now a little glass of wine! more wine! Don't you think life is beautiful? Oh, glorious! glorious!"

Exactly at six o'clock, before the door stood an elegant carriage in livery. The young wife scarcely believed her eyes. And how lovely that was! — half lying side by side, and gently rocked, to ride to the park. Acquaintances they met on the way greeted them, and comrades waved their hands and seemed to say, "Ha, ha! you sly dog! You have married money." Oh, how little people looked down below there! And however uneven the road, how easy the ride on the upholstered springs! So it should always be.

It lasted so a whole month — balls, companies, dinners, suppers, theatres. Between whiles they were at home. That was really the best of all. How delightful after the supper to take his wife away from papa and mamma; to put her in a closed carriage right before their faces; to nod to the dear parents and bid them good-by; and then to say, "We will go home and do there just what pleases us"! At home a little supper followed, and then they sat and talked until morning. At

home Gustave was always prudent; that is, in principle. One day the young wife wished to attempt smoked salmon, boiled potatoes, and oat soup. How good it tasted! Still Gustave was somewhat out of humor over this menu. On the next Friday, when it was to be salmon again, he came home with a pair of woodcock. He stood in the doorway, exclaiming, "Can you imagine anything so unheard-of, Louisa?"

"What, then?"

"You will scarcely believe what I tell you. I bought both of these partridges at the market. Guess for how much?"

The young wife was so angry that she scarcely wished to guess.

"Only think, a crown the pair!"

Louisa had once bought a pair of partridges at eighty pfennig, but she did not mention it, so as not to hurt her husband's feelings.

"But anyhow, you will admit that they are cheap?"

She must agree, if only to please him. For the evening there was oatmeal, only to try it. After Gustave had eaten a partridge, he was sorry not to eat as much oatmeal as he had really meant to. He would gladly have shown that the porridge pleased him. He really ate oatmeal, only he could not

endure milk with it. He would eat oatmeal every evening, if only his wife would not be displeased with him. After this, of course, there was an end of the oatmeal. He never had it served to him again. Six weeks passed, and the young wife grew ill. She had headaches and nausea, probably in consequence of a cold. But the nausea did not stop. Hm! Had she perhaps poisoned herself? Was it maybe the fault of the copper kettles? The doctor was called. He laughed and said it was all in order. What was in order? Something suspicious! How was that possible? No; it came from the bedroom paper. There was certainly arsenic in it. Send it to the chemist at once, and let it be analyzed. "Free from arsenic," wrote the chemist. That was remarkable — no arsenic in the wall-paper. The young wife's sickness continued. Gustave studied a medical book, and whispered something in her ear. Yes; see there, now we have it. Ha, ha! Only a warm foot-bath. Four weeks afterward the nurse declared that all was in order. In order — horrible! That is clear. But it came so quick. Still, now it was settled, how lovely it would be! Think, a child! Hurrah! They would be papa and mamma. What should they call it? A boy, of course; that was certain. But now

Louisa took her husband aside and spoke earnestly to him. Since his marriage he had not busied himself with translating or proof-reading. His salary alone was not sufficient. "Yes, yes! they had lived in riot and revel." Lord! one is never young but once. However, now all should be different."

On the next day the Secretary went to his old friend the notary, and begged him to go security for a loan. "When one is about to become a father, my dear sir, one must think of the increase in expenses."

"I agree with you perfectly," answered the notary; "on that account I have never ventured to marry. You are indeed a lucky fellow. You were able to do so."

The Secretary was ashamed to press his request. How could he have the face to ask this bachelor who had not ventured to marry on account of his small income for a loan for himself and his child? No; that he could not do.

When he came home in the evening, his wife told him two men had been there looking for him. "How did they look? Were they young? Did they wear eyeglasses? They surely were two lieutenants, good old friends from Vaxholm."

"They were not lieutenants. They looked much older."

"Indeed!" Now he knew. They were old friends from Upsala. Probably Dr. P. and Deputy O., who wished to see how the old fellow bore married life.

"No; they were not from Upsala. They were Stockholmers."

The maid was called. She thought they looked suspicious, and they had sticks.

"Sticks! Hm! Who could that be? We shall soon learn when they come again."

In the meantime he had been to the market, and had bought a can of strawberries at a bargain — at a really absurd price: "Only think, a can of pineapple strawberries for a crown and a half now — at this time of year!"

"Gustave! Gustave! What is going to become of us?"

"Don't be anxious. I have secured a new piece of work to-day."

"But the debts, Gustave."

"Trifles! Only wait till I secure a large loan."

"A loan? Then that will be a new debt."

"Yes; but at what terms! Let us not talk of such things. Were not the strawberries good? What? Would not a little glass of sherry go well afterward? What do you say? Lina, go to the wine-dealer for a bottle of sherry; genuine, mind."

After the mid-day sleep on the sofa, his wife begged to be allowed to say two words; but he must not be angry. Angry! He? God forbid! Probably money for the house.

"Well, then. The grocer is not paid. The butcher gives us warning. The liveryman wants his money. All that is, in a word, extremely disagreeable."

"Nothing more? They shall have their money, every cent, to-morrow morning. What impudence! For such trifles to give warning! To-morrow they shall receive everything. Moreover, they will lose a customer. But now we will talk no more of that. We will take a little walk. No carriage! We will go in the cars to the Park to get a little fresh air."

So they rode to the Park, and took a private room in the Alhambra. The young men in the dining-room whispered. They thought it was a pair out for a lark. So jolly, so exciting! But the wife did not quite like it. And then the bill. What could they not have had at home for that money?

Months pass. The time draws near. A cradle is needed — underclothing and dresses for the little one. And so much. Herr Gustave is busy the whole day. The price of grain had really risen. Hard times were

at hand. No translations, no proof-reading. The world had grown so material. They do not buy books any more. They use their money for bread. In what prosaic times we live. The ideal vanishes. Pheasants cannot be bought under two marks a pair. The liveryman will not drive for nothing any more, for he also has a wife and children; and even the grocer wants money for his goods. Oh, what realists! At last the eventful day arrives, and the night is near. He must run and fetch the nurse. From the sick-bed he must go out into the hall to receive his creditors. He carries his daughter in his arms. Tears come to his eyes. He feels the responsibilities weighing upon him more heavily than his strength can bear, and he makes new resolutions; but his nerves are upset. He had secured a translation, but he could not stick to it, for he had to go out continually on errands.

He rushed with the joyful tidings to his father-in-law, who had come into the city. "I am a father!"

"Good! have you bread, too, for your child?"

"At present, no. The father-in-law must help."

"This time, yes; this time, but in the future nothing more. I have little more

than you, and, besides, the other children must have something."

The invalid must have chicken to eat now, which he himself buys at the market, and genuine Johannisberger at six crowns the bottle. The nurse receives a hundred crowns. Why should they give less than others do? The captain gave a hundred crowns, too. The young wife is soon on her feet again. Like a young girl once more, slender as a willow, a little pale, but that is becoming to her. The father-in-law comes and takes Herr Gustave aside. "Now be so good as not to come to me for a while with any more children," said he, "or otherwise you will be ruined."

"What a speech for a father! Are we not man and wife? Do we not love each other, and are we not to have children?"

"Yes; but also bread for your children. All young people love easily. But the responsibility!"

The father-in-law is a materialist too. Wretched times without any ideality!

The life of the house was undermined; but love did not allow itself to be repressed, for it was strong, and young intentions are weak. But creditors are not weak. Bankruptcy threatened. An attachment was imminent. The father-in-law came with a large

wagon and carried off his daughter and grandchild. He forbade the son-in-law to show himself until he had bread for them and had paid his debts. To his daughter he said nothing. But as he rode away it seemed to him as if he had brought home a ruined maiden. He had lent out his pure child to a young man for a year, and now he had received her back again. Louisa would gladly have remained with her husband, but she could not live with her child upon the street. So Gustave must remain behind and look on while his home was made desolate. Even that did not belong to him, for it was not paid for. The two men with the eye-glasses took beds, copper and pewter, china, chandeliers, — everything, everything. And as he stood there alone in the empty room, how disheartening it was for him! If she had only stayed! But what could she do in those empty rooms? It was better so.

The bitter earnest of life began. He obtained a position on a morning paper as proof-reader. He had to be at the office at midnight, and stay there three hours. He retained his official position, because he had not yet come to bankruptcy, but he was cut off from advancement. At last it was granted him to see his wife and daughter once a week, but that only under surveillance. At

night he slept in a little room near his father-in-law's. Sunday evening he had to go back to the city, for the paper was published early on Monday morning. Then he took leave of wife and child, who accompanied him to the garden gate, and he waved to them from afar, and felt so unhappy, so miserable, so humiliated. And she?

He had reckoned that it would take him twenty years to pay his debts. After that? After that he would still be unable to provide for wife and child. Upon what, then, is any hope to be based? On nothing. If his father-in-law should die, wife and child would have nothing at all. He did not venture, therefore, to curse his only prop. Oh, how pitiless is life! It provides no sustenance for the children of men, while it gives food to all other created beings. And that this life cannot offer all men partridges and strawberries — really, it is too hard!

FOUR DAYS

By Vsevolod Garshin

I RECOLLECT how we went at double-quick through the forest; how the bullets hummed; how the branches nipped off by them kept falling around us; how we tore through the hawthorn bushes. The firing became more rapid. As we came to the outskirt of the woods, something red, flashing here and there, appeared. Siderof, a little young soldier of Company I — it occurred to me "How did he happen to be in our line?" — suddenly sat down on the ground and gazed at me with great startled eyes. A stream of blood gushed from his mouth.

Yes, I recollect that distinctly. I recollect also how, just as we reached the outskirt of the woods, I saw *him* in the thick bushes.

He was a huge, stout Turk; nevertheless, weak and thin as I was, I ran straight for him. There was a sharp report; something huge seemed to fly past me; there was a roaring in my ears.

I said to myself, "He must have fired at me." With a scream of terror he backed into a thick hawthorn bush. He might have slipped round it, but his fear took away his presence of mind and he entangled himself in the spines of the prickly branches. With one blow I knocked his gun out of his hands; with one quick thrust I struck him with the bayonet. There was a sound between that of a roar and a groan.

Then I rushed forward. Our men were cheering. Some were falling, some were firing.

I recollect that I, like the rest, fired several shots as I emerged from the forest upon the level ground. Suddenly "Hurrah!" sounded louder, and forming in line we moved forward. That is to say, not we, but ours, for I was left behind. It seemed strange to me. It was still stranger when suddenly everything vanished; all the shouts and sounds of musketry grew still. I heard absolutely nothing, but I caught a glimpse of something blue; it must have been the sky. Then that also disappeared.

* * *

Never had I found myself in such a strange situation. There I was lying on my belly with nothing but a little mound of earth

before me. A few scattered blades of grass, some ants crawling down one of them, a scattered heap of dust from the mouldered grass of by-gone years, — that constituted my whole world. And I surveyed it with only one eye, the other being held shut by some firm pressure, which must have been from the branch on which my head was resting.

I was fearfully awkward, and I tried but absolutely failed to understand why I could not move. Thus passed some little time. I heard the creaking of the grasshoppers, the buzzing of a bee. Nothing else. Finally I made an effort, freed my right arm from under me, and by dint of persistent effort with both hands I tried to get to my knees.

Something sharp and swift, like a flash of lightning, darted through my whole body from my knees to my chest and head, and once more I fall back. Again darkness; again nothingness.

* * *

I came to my senses. Why did I see stars shining so brilliantly in the black-blue Bulgarian sky? But why am I not in my tent? Why should I have left it? I make a movement and experience exquisite pain in my legs.

Yes, I was wounded in the battle. Dangerously or not? I feel of my legs where the pain was. And in truth both my right leg and my left were covered with coagulated blood. When I touch them with my hands the pain is sharper. The pain is like the toothache: steady, searching the very soul. There is a ringing in my ears; my head has grown heavy. I have a dim, confused consciousness that I am wounded in both legs.

But what does it mean? Why have they not come for me? Can the Turks have defeated us? I began to recall what happened to me, — at first confusedly, then more distinctly, — and I make up my mind that we were not defeated at all. Because I fell — that, however, I do not recollect; I remember how we all dashed forward, but I found it impossible to run; and then nothing was before my eyes except something blue — and I fell on the level ground at the top of the hillock. Our little battalion commander pointed to this piece of level ground. "Boys, we shall get there!" he cried, in his ringing voice. And we were there; of course we were not beaten.

Then why did they not come and get me? Here on this level meadow it is all open ground, perfectly exposed. Why, evidently

I am not the only one lying here; there was such rapid firing.

I must lift my head and look around. It is easier to do that now than it was at first, because at the time when I began to get my senses and noticed the grass and the ants crawling head down, and when I tried to lift myself, I did not fall in my former position, but turned over on my back. That was why I could see those stars.

I lift myself and sit up. It is hard work when both legs are helpless. Sometimes I despaired of success; but at length, with tears in my eyes, caused by my anguish, I manage to sit up.

Over my head is a patch of black-blue sky with one big star and a few lesser ones blazing in it. Around me is something black and high. It is the bushes. I am in the bushes; they failed to find me.

I feel the very roots of my hair rising on my head.

Now, how was it that I came to my senses in the bushes, when I was shot on the meadow? It must have been that, while beside myself with agony from my wound, I crawled here. But it is strange that now I cannot even move, when at that time I had the power of dragging myself as far as these bushes. But possibly at that time there was

only one wound and another shot had reached me at this place.

Pallid, rosy streaks seemed to gather around me. The great star paled; some of the lesser ones vanished.

That is the moon rising. How lovely it is at home now! . . .

Strange noises reach my ears. It seems as though some one were groaning. Yes, that is a groan. Can some one have also been forgotten near me, with broken legs or with a bullet in the body? No, those groans are so close to me, but apparently there is no one in my vicinity. . . . Good heavens! why it is myself. Gentle, pitiful groans. How, indeed, can I be suffering so atrociously? Yet, so it is. But I do not realize the full force of this agony because my head is clouded; it is like lead. It were better to lie down again and fall asleep, sleep, sleep. . . . But when shall I waken?

No matter.

At the very instant that I was making up my mind to lie down, a wide pale streak of moonlight clearly illuminated the place where I was lying, and I catch sight of something dark and large only five paces from me. The moonlight glints on what seem like metallic points. They are buttons or equipment. It is either a corpse or some one wounded.

No matter, I lie down. . . .

No, it is impossible. Our men cannot have gone. They are here; they have defeated the Turk, and have rested in this position. But why are there no sounds of voices, no crackling of camp-fires? Of course it is because I am too weak to hear anything. They certainly are here.

"Help! Help!"

Wild, senseless, hoarse wails burst from my lungs, and there is no response. They are borne afar through the night air. Utter silence else. Only the incessant chirping of the cricket. The moon looks pityingly down upon me with her round face.

If *he* were merely wounded, such a cry would wake him. It is a dead body. One of our men, or a Turk? Ah! my God, what difference does it make? And sleep descends upon my heated eyes.

* * *

I am lying with eyes shut, though it is some time since I woke.

I have no desire to open my eyes because I feel through the closed lids the sunlight. If I open my eyes the light will pain them. Besides, it is better not to move. . . . Yesterday (let me see, was it yesterday?) I was wounded; four and twenty hours have

passed; in another day and night I shall be dead. Very well. It is best not to move. Let my body be motionless. How good it would be to cease, also, all brain-work; but there is no means of stopping it. Thoughts, recollections, crowd through my head. However, all this is not for long; it will soon be over.

Only in the newspapers there will be a few lines to the effect that the loss on our side was insignificant, a few wounded. One soldier, Ivánof, from the volunteers, killed. No, they will not even give the name; it will simply say one private, just as though it were a dog. . . . A complete picture clearly flashes into my mind. That was long, long ago; but then, all things, all my life, that life of mine up to the time when I found myself lying here with broken legs, was so long, long ago. . . .

I remember I was going down the street; a knot of people blocked my way. The crowd was standing and gazing in silence at something whitish in color, covered with blood, piteously whining. It was a pretty little dog; a horse-car had run over it. It was dying just as I am now. A yard-keeper forced his way through the throng, took the dog by the neck, and carried it away. The throng dispersed.

Is no one going to carry me away? No. Lie here and die. And yet how lovely life is! . . . On the day when the misfortune happened to the dog I was happy. I had been drinking, and that was the reason. Ye recollections, torment me not! Leave me in peace. Past happiness, present torments. . . .

Let only physical anguish be mine. Let these recollections torment me not, for they involuntarily make me draw comparisons. Ah, regret! regret! thou art worse than wounds.

But it is growing hot. The sun scorches. I open my eyes; I see the same bushes, the same sky, only save that it is seen by daylight. And here also is my neighbor. Yes, it is a Turk, a corpse. What a big man! I recognize him. It is the very one whom . . .

Before me lies the man whom I had killed. Why did I kill him?

He lies there dead, blood-stained. Why did Fate bring him here? Who was he? Perhaps he, like myself, had an aged mother. Long will she sit each afternoon by the door of her wretched hut and gaze out into the far-off north. Her darling son, her supporter, her bread-winner, will not come.

And I? How is it with me? . . . I

would even change places with him. How fortunate he is! He hears nothing; he feels no pain from his wounds or deathly anguish of mind or the heat. The bayonet went straight to his heart. There in his uniform is the great black rent! There is blood around it.

I did that!

I had no wish to do it. I had no grudge against any one when we were sent out to fight. How far from me was the thought that I should have to kill any people! I simply imagined that I should have to expose *my* breast to the bullets. And I went, and so I did.

Well, and what of it? Fool, fool! And this unfortunate *fellah* (he wears the Egyptian uniform) — he was even less blameworthy than I. Before he was packed with the others on a steamer, like herrings in a cask, and brought to Constantinople, he had never heard of Russia or Bulgaria. He was ordered to come here and he came. If he had resisted, they would have beaten him with a cane, or perhaps some pasha would have struck him down with a shot from his revolver. He made the long, hard journey from Stambool to Rushchuk. We attacked; he defended himself. But when he saw that we strange people, not afraid of his patented English rifles, Pea-

body or Martini, kept pressing faster and faster forward, he lost heart. Just as he was going to run, a little man, whom he might have killed with a single blow of his black fist, ran up to him and thrust a bayonet into his heart.

Wherein was he to blame?

And wherein am I to blame, even though I killed him? Wherein am I to blame? Why am I so tormented with thirst? Thirst! Who knows what that word means? Even when we were on our way through Roumania, making forced marches of fifty versts while the mercury stood in the nineties, even then I had no idea of what it really meant. Ah, if only some one would come! My God! in that huge canteen that he has there is probably water. But I must get to it. At the cost of what pains! Yet get to it I will.

I try to crawl. My legs are useless; my enfeebled hands scarcely serve to move my helpless body. It is only twelve or fourteen feet to the body, but for me it is more — no, not more, but worse — than ten miles. Nevertheless, it is necessary to crawl. My throat burns as if it were on fire. And without water, death would come all the sooner. Yet perchance . . .

And I drag myself along. My legs catch on the ground, and every slightest motion

causes insufferable anguish. I scream, I scream and wail, and yet I continue to crawl.

At last I attain to it. Here is the canteen. There is water in it, and what a quantity! It seems as if it must be half full. Oh! water enough to last me a long time . . . till death itself.

My thirst, thou hast saved me! I began to unscrew the top, resting on one elbow, and, suddenly losing my balance, I fell face down on the chest of my preserver. Already my senses perceived a strong odor of decay.

* * *

I tasted the water. It was warm, but not spoiled, and besides there was plenty of it. I should live for several days yet. I remember what I used to read in the "Physiology of Every-day Life." It said that a man could live for more than a week without food, provided he had water to drink. Yes, and there was a story in it of a suicide who determined to starve himself to death. He lived for a long time because he drank water.

Well, what of it? Suppose I live five or six days longer, what will happen? Our troops have gone, the Bulgarians have dispersed. There is no highway near. It is all the same — death. Except that instead of a death agony lasting three days I shall

have made it last a week. Would it not be better to end all?

My neighbor's rifle is lying beside him — a splendid English weapon. I have only to stretch out my hand; then one flash and all is over. The cartridges have rolled out — a lot of them. He did not have time to fire them all.

Shall I put an end to it or wait? Wait for what? Deliverance? Death? Wait until the Turks come and begin to strip the skin off from my wounded legs? Better myself . . .

No, there is no use to lose courage; I will struggle till the end, so long as my strength holds out. If they find me, I am saved. Perhaps the bones are not injured; they will cure me. I shall see my country, my mother, Masha. . . .

Heavens! pray *they* do not know the whole truth. Let them suppose that I was killed instantly. What would they do if they knew that I had been suffering tortures for two, three, four days?

My head whirled; my journey across to my neighbor had tired me out. And here was still that terrible odor. How black he has grown! . . . What will he be to-morrow or the day after? And here I lie simply because I have no force left to drag myself

away. I will rest awhile and crawl back to my old place. By the way, the wind blows from that direction and will carry away from me that ill smell.

I lie in a state of absolute exhaustion. The sun scorches my face and hands. Impossible to protect them. Would that night would come soon! Let me see, this will be the second.

My thoughts become entangled and I forget myself.

* * *

I must have slept long, because when I awoke it was already night. No change: my wounds still smart as before; my neighbor lay just as huge and motionless as ever.

I cannot help thinking of him. Can it be that I have thrown away all that was sweet and dear, have travelled a thousand miles from home, have suffered from hunger and cold, have been scorched with the sun, — can it be that I lie here in all this anguish, simply in order that this unhappy wretch might cease to live? And have I done anything at all advantageous for the ends of war beside this murder?

Murder! murderer? . . . And who? . . . I!

When I first proposed to enlist, my mother and Masha did not attempt to dissuade me,

though they shed tears over me. Blinded by an idea, I did not see their tears. I did not realize, as I do now, what I was bringing upon those nearest and dearest to me. But why indulge in recollection? It will not cause the past to return.

And what a strange way of looking at my exploit many of my acquaintances seemed to have. "There! the foolish fellow. He got himself unwittingly into a pretty scrape." How can they say such a thing? how reconcile such words with their representations of heroism, of patriotism, and other things of the sort? Why, in their eyes I represented all these virtues, and yet I am a foolish fellow!

And so I came to Kishenef. They put a knapsack on my back and loaded me down with all sorts of military equipments, and forth I marched with thousands of others, many of whom, like myself, enlisted as volunteers. The rest would have stayed at home if they had been allowed. But they marched just the same as we, "the sensible ones" did; they marched the thousand miles and fought just as we did, perhaps even better. They fulfilled their obligations, in spite of the fact that they would have thrown down their arms and quitted the service, if only they were permitted.

A faint morning breeze sprang up. The bushes gently waved, a sleepy bird fluttered its wings. The stars began to disappear. The dark-blue sky became luminous; tender, feathery clouds swept over; a grayish mist rose from the ground.

Thus broke the third day of my — what shall I call it? — life? — the last agony?

The third. . . . How many more are still left? At most not many. I have grown very weak and apparently cannot get farther away from the corpse. It and I will soon be alike, and then we shall no longer be disagreeable to each other.

I must have a drink of water. I will drink only three times a day: morning, noon, and night.

* * *

The sun has risen. His huge disk, crossed and intersected by the dark branches of the bushes, is as red as blood. It promises to be hot to-day. Neighbor, how is it with thee? Thou art dreadful by this time.

Yes, he was dreadful. His hair had begun to fall off. His skin, naturally dark, had turned wan and yellowish; his face was so swollen and distended that it was cracked even to the ear. It was already a mass of loathsome worms. His whole body was puffed out into a festering mass. What will become of him in the hot sun to-day?

It is unendurable to be lying so near to him. I must crawl away, though it be never so small a distance. But is it in my power? I am still able to raise my arm to open the canteen, to drink; but can I lift my heavy, immovable body? Still I will try to crawl away, though it be only a little at a time, though it were only a foot an hour.

Thus the whole morning passes with me in this position. The agony is intense, but what is that to me now? No longer can I realize, can I imagine, the sensation of a well man. I have become entirely wonted to pain. During this morning I have managed to drag myself about fourteen feet, and here I am again in my former place. But it is only for a short time that I have the luxury of pure air, if any air can be considered pure that is within a radius of half a dozen paces of a rotting body.

The wind changed and brought to me such a disgusting odor that I was nauseated. My empty stomach painfully and spasmodically retched. It seemed as though all my vitals were being torn out. And the putrid pestilential air still blows over me.

I fell into a state of despair and wept.

* * *

Perfectly exhausted, crazy with despair, I

lay almost unconscious. Suddenly . . . was it not the delusion of a disordered imagination? I think not.

Yes, it was the sound of voices. The trampling of horses' hoofs, the voices of men. I almost cried out, but restrained myself. Well, supposing it were Turks? What then? To the torments already experienced others still more horrible would be added, such as make the hair stand on end even when you read about them in the papers. They skin their prisoners alive; they hold wounded limbs over slow fires. . . . All right, if that were all; but they are so inventive! Were it not better to end my life even at their hands than perish here? And perhaps it may be our men? Oh, cursed bushes! Why have you thrown about me such a thick hedge? There is no seeing through them, only in one place something like a little window among the branches gives me a view out into the hollow. There, I think, is the brook from which we got a drink just before the battle. Yes, there was a huge slab of sandstone laid across the brook like a bridge.

They are apparently crossing over it now. The voices have ceased. I cannot distinguish the language in which they were talking — my hearing also has grown feeble.

Heavens! if they were our men!

I will shout to them; they will hear me even from the brook. That is better than to run the risk of falling into the hands of the bashi-bazuks. Why are they so long in coming?

I am tormented with impatience; I no longer notice even the odor of the corpse, though it is just as foul as ever.

And suddenly in the break in the bushes appear the Cossacks,—the blue uniforms, the red stripes, the pikes, — a whole company of them. At their head on a splendid horse a black-bearded officer. As soon as the company broke through the bushes, he turned round on his saddle and shouted —

"F-o-o-r-wa-ard!"

"Wait! wait! for God's sake! Help! help! comrades!" I cried. But the trampling of the vigorous horses, the clanking of the sabres, and the loud voices of the Cossacks drowned my feeble wail. They do not hear me!

Oh, accursed! And I fell back motionless, face down on the ground, and began to sob again. The canteen tipped over and the waters flowed out — my life, my salvation, the postponement of my death! But I noticed it only when it was all lost except a half glass; all the rest has soaked into the dry, parched ground.

Can I give any idea of the numbness that seized upon me after that horrible accident? I lay motionless with half-closed eyes. The wind was constantly changing that day, and at one moment I breathed a fresh, pure air, and the next the odor of decay was borne to me.

By the end of the day my neighbor had grown horrible beyond description. Once when I opened my eyes to look at him, I was stricken with terror. He had no longer any face! It had slipped from the bones. The terrible bony smile, that perpetual grin, never before seemed so repulsive, so frightful, though more than once I had held a skull in my hands, and even dissected human heads. This skeleton in its bright-buttoned uniform made me shudder. "This," I said to myself, "is war. This is the emblem of it."

And the sun scorches and bakes as hotly as ever. My hands and face have been long burned and blistered. I have drunk my last drop of water. My thirst was so cruel that, though I resolved to drink only a little swallow, I finished it at a draught. Ah! why did I not shout to the Cossacks when they were so near to me? Even if they had been Turks, that were better than this. They might have tortured me for an hour or two,

but now I have no idea how long I shall have to suffer here.

My mother! my dear mother! How thou wouldst tear thy gray hair, how thou wouldst beat thy head against the wall, how thou wouldst curse the day that thou didst bring me forth, how thou wouldst curse the whole world, — to think of the suffering that men undergo in war! But thou and Masha, of course, have not heard of my anguish. Farewell, mother; farewell, my sweetheart, — my bride! Ah, what agony, what torment! Something goes through my heart.

Once more that poor little dog. The yard-keeper had no mercy on it as he beat its head against the wall and flung it into a pit where garbage was thrown and into which slops were drained. But it was still alive, and it suffered for a whole day. But I am more unfortunate than the dog, for here I have been suffering for three whole days. To-morrow will be the fourth, then will come the fifth, then the sixth. . . . Death, where art thou? Come! come! Take me!

But Death does not come and does not take me; and here I lie under this fearful sun and not a drop of water to quench my fiery thirst, and the corpse is poisoning me. It has entirely disintegrated. Myriads of worms are dropping from it. How they swarm!

When he is entirely destroyed and nothing but his bones and uniform are left, then it will be my turn, and I shall be like him.

The day passes, the night passes; still the same. The morning dawns; still the same. Another day goes. The bushes keep whispering and whispering, just as though they were talking softly. "Here you'll perish, perish, perish!" they whisper. "What's to be seen here? What's to be seen here, seen here?" reply the bushes on the other side.

"What's the use? What's to be seen here?" says a loud voice near me.

I gave a start and came to my senses. From among the bushes gazed the kind blue eyes of our corporal, Yakovlef.

"Spades, here!" he cried. "Here are a couple more — one ours, the other theirs."

"I don't want a spade; I don't want to be buried! I'm alive," I try to cry, but only a weak groan comes from my parched lips.

"Heavens! he can't be alive, can he? Barin Ivánof! Boys, come here, our Barin is alive! Bring the surgeon — quick!"

* * *

In half a minute they are pouring water into my mouth, brandy and something else. Then there comes a blank.

Swinging along in step, the bearers carry

the stretcher. This measured motion lulls me. Sometimes I sleep, then I wake again. My bandaged wounds no longer pain me. An unspeakably comfortable sensation pervades my whole body. . . .

"Ha-a-alt! Set stretcher! Fou-rth relie-f! Rea-dy! Forward ma-a-arch!"

That command was given by Piótr Ivánuitch, our hospital officer, a tall, thin, and very good-natured man. He was so tall that when I turned my eyes in his direction I could constantly see his face, with its thin long beard, and his shoulders, although the stretcher is borne on the shoulders of four full-grown men.

"Piótr Ivánuitch!" I whisper.

"What is it, my boy?"

Piótr Ivánuitch bent over me.

"Piótr Ivánuitch, what does the doctor say? Shall I die soon?"

"That'll do, Ivánof! you aren't going to die. Why, all your bones are whole! What a lucky fellow — neither bones nor arteries touched! And how did you live these three days and a half? What did you have to eat?"

"Nothing!"

"Did you have nothing to drink?"

"I got the Turk's canteen. Piótr Ivánuitch, I can't talk now. Wait till by and by!"

"Well, God bless you, my boy; have a nap!"

Again sleep, forgetfulness.

I came to in the division hospital. Above me stood the doctor, surgeons, the Sisters of Mercy, and beside them I saw the well-known face of a famous Petersburg professor bending over my legs. His hands were bloody. He busied himself with my legs for a short time and then turned to me:

"Well, you had a narrow escape, young man. You will live. We have only taken off one leg; that's a mere trifle. Can you talk?"

I could talk, and I told him all that I have written down here.

THE LOVE OF THE NATURAL

By Villiers de l'Isle Adam

"Man can invent everything save the art of being happy."
Napoleon Bonaparte.

DURING one of his morning excursions in the forest of Fontainebleau, Monsieur C —— (at that time at the head of the Government), while straying over grass and dew in the last rays of sunrise, found himself in a kind of valley beside the ravine of Apremont.

Always of a sort of rectilinear elegance, quite simple, in round hat and buttoned frock-coat, with a matter-of-fact air, in his distinguished modesty nowhere exceeding the appearance of a professional tourist, he was abandoning himself to the charms of Nature for health's sake.

Suddenly he discovered that "reverie had conducted his steps" towards a hut — commodious enough, and quite natty with its two windows and green shutters. Coming closer to it, Monsieur C —— could see that the

planks of this unusual dwelling were provided with numbers in order, and that it was a kind of movable booth, let, doubtless, to whoever wanted it. Upon the door was written, in white capital letters, these two names, DAPHNIS AND CHLOE.

This inscription astonished him. With smiling curiosity, yet discreetly, — in a word, without in the least dreaming of intruding upon this hermitage, — he knocked politely at the door.

"Come in!" called two fresh young voices from within.

He lifted the latch and the door opened, just as a sunbeam, flitting through the leaves, lighted up the interior of this idyllic dwelling.

Monsieur C——, upon the threshold, found himself in the presence of a very young man, with locks of fair hair, the features of a Greek medallion, a clear skin, and sceptical blue eyes, whose fine glance yielded that peculiar challenging look which belongs to Norman eyes; also of a very young damsel, with an ingenuous face of a pure oval, crowned with beautiful brown tresses. Both were dressed in full mourning of homespun, of a cut which only their shapeliness made passable. Both were charming, and their artistic look, strangely enough, awakened no distaste.

The head of the Government was a man who had seen the world, but in spite of himself he found himself rejoicing at sight of another variety of face than that of governors, lieutenant-governors, and mayors. It rested his eyes.

Daphnis was standing beside a rustic table. The amiable Chloe, regarding the unexpected guest with lowered eyelids, was seated upon an iron bed — a new patent — with a mattress of seaweed, white, coarse coverings, and double pillow. Three plain chairs, some housekeeping utensils, plates and china cups in imitation of old Limoges, and on the table a bright service of new plated ware completed the furnishing of this nomadic retreat.

"Stranger," said Daphnis, "be welcome — you who enter with this unhoped-for ray of sunlight. You will breakfast with us quite informally, will you not? We have eggs, milk, cheese, — even coffee! Chloe, quick, another plate!"

The powerful ones of earth like simple and unexpected things, and willingly lend themselves to the fascinations of an incognito among the lowly. With such a reception, Monsieur C —— could scarcely refuse to be friendly, and, by way of amusing himself (for this once, and as an exception), permit himself to relax a little the rigidity of his character.

"Here," he thought, "are two eccentric young persons escaped from some corner of Paris who have adopted this ingenious method of passing their vacation. Perhaps they will prove more amusing than the people of my own circle. We shall see."

"My young friends," he replied, smiling, with the air of a king of old-time among his shepherds, "I love the natural, and I accept your sylvan courtesy."

They took their places about the table, where, Chloe having bestirred herself, the repast immediately began.

"Ah! the natural," sighed Daphnis, with a deep sigh. "We are here for that. We seek it with hearts guiltless of subterfuge; but in vain!"

Monsieur C —— looked at them. "What! How is this, my young friends? It is all around you; the natural, with all its pure joys, embraces you here — all its rural fruits! Behold them — excellent milk, slices of fresh-buttered bread!"

"Ah!" exclaimed Chloe. "True, fair stranger, — one can drink the milk; for it is, I believe, made with excellent sheeps' brains."

"As to the bread and butter," murmured Daphnis, "whether it is really bread, you know, with the new baking-powders, one can never be sure; but as to the butter, I confess

that it seemed to me an interesting oleomargarine. However, if you would prefer cheese, here is some — in confidence let me say — of which tallow and chalk constitute scarcely more than a third part. It is a new process."

At these words, Monsieur C —— considered more attentively his two young Amphitryons.

"And your names are Daphnis and Chloe?" said he.

"Oh! they are only our nicknames," replied Daphnis. "Our families, once in easy circumstances, lived in Paris in the Champs-Élysées, until a sudden failure reduced them to labor. I, a fresh-made bachelor of laws, was about to yawn my time out, as every one does, till I could enter the bar; and Chloe had already taken her degree as a doctor, and was about beginning practice, when a little legacy made it possible for us to marry immediately without waiting for clients or patients, and to try to take up again, agreeably to our natural tastes, our life of the time of Longus; but it is difficult nowadays. What! You have not finished eating, dear stranger? Will you have some fried eggs? These are quite in fashion. They produce them for exportation, you know. Three millions of these artificial eggs

America ships us daily. They are dipped in a little acid, which forms the shell — yes, instantaneously. Believe me. Try some. We shall have some coffee afterwards. It is excellent. Imitation chiccory — first quality. The annual sales in Paris alone mount up to eighteen million francs, according to official statistics. Pray don't refuse. We offer it most heartily and without ceremony."

Monsieur C ——, whose curiosity was aroused in spite of himself by this youthful frankness, diplomatically turned the conversation, in order, with the utmost politeness possible, to avoid replying to his host's cordial invitation.

"A little legacy, you say?" he rejoined, with an air of sympathetic interest. "You are even now, in fact, in mourning, my dear young friends."

"Yes; we are wearing it for our poor uncle Polémon," moaned Chloe, wiping away an invisible tear.

"Polémon?" said Monsieur C ——, searching his memory. "Ah, yes! He who, like Silenus, was a good drinker of wine in the days of legends?"

"Himself!" sighed Daphnis. "Did he not awaken every morning with a dry throat — the worthy instrument of Bacchus? He loved natural wine; hence, betaking himself,

that it seemed to me an interesting oleomargarine. However, if you would prefer cheese, here is some — in confidence let me say — of which tallow and chalk constitute scarcely more than a third part. It is a new process."

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"Himself!" sighed Daphnis. "Did he not awaken every morning with a dry throat — the worthy instrument of Bacchus? He loved natural wine; hence, betaking himself,

in his country house, to a flagon of that famous proprietary wine, you know" —

"Yes, fair stranger," insisted Chloe, with a musical little professional voice, "a gallon of that mixture, so well compounded with tartrate and plaster and the due amount of arsenic that four or five hundred people have died of it, — of that generous wine drunk by the modern artisans of France, while they sing, with light heart, the famous old song, —

> "'I think, while I thank God,
> They have none of this in England!'"

"So, then," Daphnis continued, "the Supreme Being having called him to Himself the same evening of the purchase of the wine, our uncle Polémon obeyed the summons in the midst of atrocious colic, — the unfortunate old man! — and thus bequeathed to us some drachmas. But pardon me, perhaps you smoke, dear stranger? Will you have one of these cigars? They are really passable, and of a fair sort, — an importation from America, as usual, — made of leaves of paper steeped in a decoction of clarified nicotine, collected from the best Havana cigar-ends; they sell two or three millions monthly, you know, in France alone. These are the best brand, on the testimony of the Government stamp."

At this, Monsieur C ——, thinking he perceived, mingling with these last words, a vague intention of directing irony at Progress, believed he ought to assume something of an official tone.

"Thank you," he said; "but if it be true, alas! that some abuses have crept into modern industry, with care one may always find the genuine. Besides, at your age, what matter the vain pleasures of the table? Here, above all, in the midst of living nature, of these magnificent long-lived trees, whose venerable branches — salubrious fragrance" —

"Permit me, dear stranger," rejoined Daphnis, opening his eyes wide. "What! you do not know, then? These superb oaks, these lofty larches, which have sheltered so many royal love-affairs, having undergone during a certain recent winter's night five or six degrees more cold than their roots could support (this is according to the report of the State Inspectors of Waters and Forests), are, in reality, *dead*. You can see the official notch which marks them for cutting down next year. They will end in the chimneys of Government officials. These leaves are their last; they draw life only from their acquired momentum. It is but a brilliant agony. An expert need only throw a glance at their bark to know that the sap has ceased

to flow. So then, under the living look of their foliage, we are really surrounded with innumerable vegetable spectres, phantoms of trees. The old trees leave us; room for the young ones!"

A cloud crossed the mathematical forehead of Monsieur C——. Across the high boughs, outside, a little cold shower came clicking down.

"I do, indeed, recall it now," he murmured; "but let us not exaggerate; and let us not scrutinize too closely if we wish to distinguish anything. This exuberant summer nature remains to us."

"How!" exclaimed Daphnis anew, "how, dear stranger, can you consider a summer 'natural' in which Chloe and I pass a whole afternoon shivering together?"

"The summer is not of the warmest, indeed, this year," replied Monsieur C——. "But what of that! lift your eyes higher, young people. The sight of the vast sky intact and pure remains to you."

"A sky intact and pure, where every day swarms of balloons pass filled with enlightened gentlemen? It is no longer a 'natural' sky, dear stranger."

"But at night, in the starlight, when the nightingale sings, you can forget"—

"Then," murmured Daphnis, "interminable

electric rays traverse the dark with their immense brooms of misty light that modify every instant the light from the stars, and adulterate the fair shining of the moon upon the woods. Night is no longer 'natural.'"

"As to the nightingales," sighed Chloe, "the continual whistling of the trains from Melun has frightened them away; they sing no more, fair stranger."

"Oh, young people!" cried Monsieur C ——, "you also are very — exacting. If you love the natural so much, why did you not choose the seashore? As of yore — the roar of the great waves — the stormy days" —

"The sea, dear stranger?" said Daphnis. "Can we ignore the fact that a great cable encircles, from one end to the other, this overrated immensity? It is enough, you know, to spill one or two barrels of oil over it to appease the highest waves for nearly a league around. As to the lightnings of its storms, from the moment they were made to descend from the middle of a kite into a jar the sea has not seemed to us so — 'natural.'"

"In any case," said Monsieur C ——, "the mountains remain, for exalted souls, a haven where calm" —

"The mountains?" replied Daphnis. "Which ones? The Alps, for instance?

Mont Cenis? — with its railway running through from side to side like a rat, and which besoots with its smoke, like a fetid perambulating censer, the table-lands once green and habitable? Express trains overrun the mountains from peak to base with cog-wheel brakes. The mountains are no longer 'natural.'"

There was a moment's silence. "Then," Monsieur C —— immediately replied, resolved to learn just how far the parodoxes of these two elegizing lovers of nature would go, — "then what do you count upon doing?"

"Nothing — except to renounce it!" cried Daphnis. "To follow the times. And, in order to live, do something; for example, take to politics, if you like. That brings in 'good returns.'"

At this Monsieur C —— started, and, repressing a burst of laughter, looked at them both.

"Ah!" said he, "really? And, if I am not impertinent, what would you be in politics, Monsieur Daphnis?"

"Oh!" said Chloe tranquilly, always in an exquisitely professional and matter-of-fact voice, "since, kind stranger, Daphnis represents, in himself, the part of the rural mal-contents, I have advised him to present himself,

at all hazards, as a carpet-bag candidate from the most backward district in the country. He himself agrees. Now, what is necessary, nowadays, in the eyes of the majority of electors to deserve the legislative badge? To take good care, above all, to write or to have written the least artistic book; to know how to prevent oneself from being endowed with great talent in any art; to affect to scorn as frivolous anything which borders upon a production of the imagination — that is to say, to speak of such only with a patronizing smile, abstracted and placid; to understand how to give habitually an impression of himself as a sane mediocrity; to be able to kill time every day with three hundred colleagues either by voting to order or by making out to one another that each is at bottom only a surly braggart, entirely destitute of disinterestedness save for rare exceptions, and every evening in chewing a toothpick and regarding the rabble with a stony stare while he murmurs, 'Bah! Things will take care of themselves; things will take care of themselves.' Such are the preliminary conditions, is it not true, requisite for being a possible legislator? Once elected, he portions out nine thousand francs' worth of appointments (and the perquisites), for one does not pay with words in politics. He is called the

Government, and confers upon his dear little Chloe one or two fine offices for the collection of the tobacco tax. That would not be half bad, I think; and it is an easy trade. Why should you not try it, Daphnis?"

"Eh!" said Daphnis, "I don't say no. It is a question of expense for handbills and posters, and of making applications for which one could, if need be, survive the inevitable sinking of the heart. After all, if it was only a matter of making a decision to carry the thing off — See here, dear stranger, let us put them all in your hat and draw by lot! You ought to have the lucky hand, I feel that; I bet you will bring out the best one among them. Besides, later, if another looked pleasanter — smiled more upon me — Whew! at the price they come to nowadays, according to what they weigh and produce, I should not give myself the trouble to change. Decisions, nowadays, are no longer 'natural,' you see."

Monsieur C ——, as an affable man with an enlightened mind, condescended to smile at these innocent paradoxes which the age of these precocious young geniuses excused in his eyes.

"Indeed, Monsieur Daphnis," said he, "you could represent the part of cynic-loyal, and under that title unite many votes."

"Without reckoning," rejoined Chloe, "if I may believe, fair stranger, the bit of newspaper which wrapped the cheese this morning, that several districts are seeking to counterbalance (inventing for the purpose *some one* at present unfindable) the troublesome influence of a certain 'General' who is become the popular infatuation, the deputy in fashion, and whose politics"—

"A 'General,' do you say, Chloe?" interrupted Daphnis, with astonishment; "a General who deals in politics, and who is a deputy. Is a General, then, not now 'natural'?"

"No," said Monsieur C——, graver, in spite of himself, this time. "But let us conclude, my young friends. Your youthful frankness, somewhat odd, but amiable, has gained my sympathy, and I ought in my turn to make myself known. I am at present at the head of the French Government, of which you are, it appears, citizens ironical; and I carefully take note, Monsieur Daphnis, of your approaching candidacy."

Opening his coat, Monsieur C—— let them see, between his waistcoat and his fine white shirt, starched and stiff, that length of broad red watered ribbon so effective in his pictures, and leaving no doubt as to the august function he bears, — that, in brief,

which takes the place of the crown without shocking any one.

"Behold, the King!" cried Daphnis and Chloe with one voice, rising, struck with astonishment and vague respect.

"There is no longer any King, young people," said Monsieur C——, coldly. "True, I have the power of a King — to some degree" —

"I understand," murmured Daphnis, in a condoling tone. "You are no longer a 'natural' king."

"At least I have the honor to preside over a 'natural' republic," dryly replied Monsieur C——, rising.

Daphnis coughed gently at these words, but without interrupting, and with deference, — not yet being a "deputy."

"As such," added Monsieur C——, "I exempt you from the *octroi* tax, in recognition of your graceful hospitality; and, as an exception, give you full and complete license to occupy, without disturbance from *our* guards, during the vacation of 1888, this unfrequented valley, situated in one of the chief Government forests. When the time comes, if I can be of greater service to you — you young laggards of such a legend as Progress is, alas! — I shall see to it, you may rest assured."

"Blessed be the day!" began Daphnis. And the "King" bowed to the two "shepherds," and withdrew with steady step beneath the huge dead trees toward the distant old palace, leaving the pseudo pair of the time of Longus somewhat stunned by their adventure.

Having returned to the royal dwelling, where Monsieur C —— was, for the time being, I believe, occupying the apartments of St. Louis (the least inhabitable, for that matter, of this ancient structure, which has no longer any reason for existing, save as a hunting-box or picturesque country dwelling), the honored president of the present administration, smoking a *genuine* cigar in the oratory of the conqueror of Ali Mansourah, could not refrain from acknowledging to himself that, at bottom, the love of things *too* natural is no longer aught but a dream, scarce to be realized, and for that reason the better adapted to occupy the attention of backward-looking people; and that for Daphnis and Chloe to lead to-day their simple rustic life — for them to nurture themselves, namely, on *real* milk, *real* bread, *real* butter, *real* cheese, *real* wine, in *real* woods under a *real* sky in a *real* hut, united by a love guiltless of afterthought — they would have to begin by placing their so-called hut upon a basis of

about twenty-five thousand livres' income, it being understood that the first of the benefactions which we indubitably owe to science is to have placed the simple, essential, "natural" things of life *beyond the ability of the poor*.

KAREN.

By Alexander Kielland.

THERE was once a girl in Krarup Inn by the name of Karen.

Her work was to wait on the guests; and she had to do it alone, for the innkeeper's wife was nearly always tripping about looking for her keys. And Krarup Inn was much frequented, both by people from the neighborhood, who gathered on summer evenings after supper in the capacious guest-hall and drank their old-fashioned coffee-punch in a sort of general way, without any particular purpose, and by travellers and wayfarers who came in — dusty and overcome by the wind — to get something warm, in order to keep up their spirits till they reached the next inn.

But Karen attended to them all, although she went about so quietly and never seemed to be in a hurry.

She was slight and small, quite young, serious, and silent, so there was not much of

interest in her for the "drummers." But regular guests, who took their inn-visits seriously, and appreciated that the coffee was served promptly and scalding hot, — they thought all the more of Karen. And when she slipped about among them with her tray, the slow, heavy peasants moved aside and made way for her with unusual alacrity, and the conversation ceased for a moment. All had to look at her when she passed — she was so fine.

Karen's eyes were of that large, gray kind which seem to see and at the same time look far beyond; and the eyebrows were strongly arched, as if wondering at something.

Strangers thought, therefore, that she did not understand what they asked for; but she always understood, and never made any mistakes. Still, there was a little something about her — as if she were looking far beyond her surroundings — or listening — or waiting — or dreaming.

The west wind came rushing in over the low Jutland Heath. It had been rolling long, heavy waves all the way over the North Sea. Salt, and wet with froth and foam, it threw itself across the coast and went ashore; but among the high *klitter* covered with *marehalm* it had become dry and heavy with sand, and a little tired, so that when it reached Krarup

Inn it was all it could do to open the large barn doors.

But they had to give way; and the wind filled the whole barn and forced its way in through the kitchen door, which stood ajar; and at last the pressure became so great that the double doors at the other end of the barn burst open, and now the west wind swept triumphantly through, swinging the lantern which hung from the roof; tearing off the hostler's cap and carrying it away out in the darkness; blowing the blankets over the horses' heads; and pushing a white hen off the roost down into the water-trough. The fowl set up a terrible cackling; the hostler swore; the girls in the kitchen were nearly choked with smoke; and the horses became unmanageable, and stamped sparks from the stone floor. Even the ducks, that had huddled together around the mangers, so as to be on hand for the oats that would be spilled, took to quacking; and the wind swept through with a frightful roar, until two men came out from the guest-hall, put their broad backs against the doors, and forced them together again, while the sparks blew about their beards from their large pipes.

After these achievements the wind went down among the heather, ran along the deep ditches, and gave a jerk to the mail-

coach, which it met a couple of miles away.

"He is always in such a devilish hurry to get to that tavern," grumbled Anders, the driver, and cracked his whip over the heads of the steaming horses.

For it was about the twentieth time that the mail-clerk in the coach had lowered the window and urged Anders on. At first it was a friendly invitation to a cup of coffee-punch at the Inn; but gradually the cordiality became weaker, until the window came down with a crash, after several brief comments on horses and driver which cut deeply into Anders's sensitive soul.

Meanwhile the wind swept along close to the ground, and sighed heavily and ominously in the dry heather. The moon was full, but thickly veiled by clouds, so that it gave only a faint, misty glimmer to the darkness of the night.

Back of Krarup Inn was a peat-bog, with piles of dark peat and deep, dangerous holes from which they had been dug. A strip of grass wound its way through the heather, like some neglected road; but it was not a road, for it terminated at one of the peat-holes which was larger and deeper than the rest.

In the grass, flat on the ground, a fox lay

watching; and a rabbit was skipping nimbly over the heather.

The fox easily concluded that the rabbit was not going to make a long circuit so late in the evening. Cautiously he raised his pointed nose over the grass and made a calculation; and as he sneaked back with the wind to find a favorable point from which he could see where the rabbit would close the circle and lie down for the night he mused complacently over the fact that foxes were getting wiser, but rabbits more and more stupid.

At the Inn the people were unusually busy, for a couple of drummers had ordered roast rabbit. Besides, the innkeeper had gone to an auction in Thisted in the morning, and his wife had never managed anything but the kitchen. But now it happened unfortunately that a lawyer came to see the host on a matter of business, and as he was not at home, his wife was obliged to memorize a lengthy account of the case and to be responsible for an exceedingly important letter — all of which completely bewildered her.

Before the fireplace stood a stranger in a rubber coat, waiting for a bottle of soda-water; two fishbuyers had three times ordered cognac for their coffee; the hostler was standing with an empty lantern in his hand, waiting for

a tallow candle; and a tall, lean peasant followed Karen with an anxious look — he was to have sixty-three *öre* back on a *krone*.

But Karen went back and forth without haste or confusion. It would seem almost impossible for her to manage all this. The large, wondering eyes seemed to be strained with expectation. She held her fine little head so firmly and immovably — as if not to be disturbed by all she had to think of. Her blue homespun gown was rather tight, and had made a red crease across her neck, just below the hair.

"Those Agger girls are all so fair," said one of the fishbuyers; they were young men, and discussed Karen's merits with the air of connoisseurs.

Standing at the window was a man who observed, as he looked at his watch, that "the post was early to-night."

There was a rumbling over the stone pavement outside; the large barn doors were thrown open; and the wind shook the kitchen door once more, and blew the smoke out of the stove.

Karen slipped into the kitchen just as the front door was opened. The mail-clerk stepped into the guest-hall and bid a general good-evening, with a touch of patronage, as befitting an official of his pretensions.

He was a tall, handsome man, with black eyes, black curly beard and hair. The long cape, with ample folds of the gorgeous red cloth of the Danish government, was ornamented by a collar of dogskin which reached down over his shoulders.

The sparse rays from the two paraffine lamps hanging over the long oaken table seemed all in sudden infatuation to seek the bright red of the cape, which contrasted sharply with the sombre gray and black of the room. As the tall form with the small, curly head, the broad collar, and the long red folds passed through the low smoky room, he seemed a veritable marvel of beauty and splendor.

Karen soon came back from the kitchen with her tray. She bent her head forward, partly concealing her face, as she hurried from one guest to another.

She placed the roasted rabbit before the two fishbuyers, and brought a bottle of soda-water for the drummers, who sat in a little room by themselves; then she gave the anxious farmer a tallow candle, and, as she hurried out again, handed sixty-three *öre* to the stranger at the fireplace.

The innkeeper's wife was in despair. True, she had unexpectedly found her keys, but immediately after lost the lawyer's letter;

and now everything was in an uproar. Nobody had received what he had ordered, and everybody talked at once. The drummers rang their bell incessantly; the fishbuyers nearly split their sides laughing over the roasted rabbit, which lay on the platter before them, looking as uncomfortable as a small boy on horseback; while the anxious farmer tapped the hostess cautiously on the shoulder with the tallow candle — he was trembling for his sixty-three *öre*. And in the midst of this confusion Karen suddenly disappeared.

Anders, the driver, was on his high seat in front of the mail-coach; the chore-boy stood ready to open the barn doors; the two passengers in the coach became impatient to be off, and the horses too — although they were better off where they were; and the wind shook the doors and whistled through cracks and crevices.

At last the mail-clerk came. As he stepped up to the coach he made a slight apology because he had kept them waiting. The light from the lantern fell upon his face — he looked warm, and made some remark to that effect, with a faint smile, as he put on his coat and mounted beside the driver.

The doors were opened, and the mail-coach rumbled out. Anders allowed the

horses to go at an easy gait, for now there was no longer any hurry. From time to time he glanced at the mail-clerk by his side, who sat smiling in an absent-minded way, heedless of the wind, which shook his long, curly hair.

Anders, too, smiled in his own way; he began to understand.

The wind followed the coach to the first turn in the road; then it went on, out over the plains, and sighed and soughed ominously through the dry heather. The fox was at his post. All had been accurately calculated: the rabbit would soon appear.

In the tavern Karen appeared again at last, and the confusion gradually subsided: the anxious farmer got rid of his tallow candle and was given his sixty-three *öre*, and the drummers made a vigorous beginning on the rabbit.

The innkeeper's wife whimpered a little, but she didn't blame Karen; no one ever thought of blaming Karen for anything.

Quietly and without haste again she went to and fro, and the comfortable feeling which everybody always felt in her presence soon spread throughout the dimly lighted guest-hall. But the two fishbuyers, who had each had a glass of cognac with their coffee, were quite infatuated with her. There was more

than the usual color in her cheeks. A half-hidden glimmer of a smile lit up her face; and when she, once in a great while, raised her eyes, they looked bewildered.

But as she was conscious that their eyes followed her, she went into the room where the drummers were still eating and began to polish some silver spoons.

"Did you notice the mail-clerk?" asked one of the drummers.

"No; I believe he soon went out again," answered the other, with his mouth full.

"A devilish good-looking fellow that! — I danced at his wedding."

"So he is married?"

"Why, yes! — his wife lives in Lemvig. I believe they have two children. She is a daughter of the innkeeper at Ulstrup, and I chanced to be there the evening of the wedding. That was a jolly night."

Karen dropped the spoons and went out of the room. They called her from the guest-hall; but she did not hear. She went straight to her room and locked the door. Half-conscious, she stood motionless in the dark. Then she caught at her head, she caught at her breast — gasping for breath; she could not understand — no, she could not understand.

But when she heard the keeper's wife

calling pitifully: "Karen, oh, little Karen!" — then she was aroused. She ran across the farmyard, behind the barn, and out — out into the heather.

In the dim light a strip of grass wound its way through the heather, as if it were some neglected road; but it was not a road, for it only led to the edge of the deep peat-hole.

The rabbit jumped up — it had heard a splash. It dashed away by long leaps, as if it had gone mad: now with legs drawn up and the back rounded, now stretched to an incredible length, — like a piece of India-rubber, — it leaped on over the heather.

The fox raised his pointed nose and stared at the rabbit in astonishment. He had not heard any splash. In accordance with the most approved method, he had come listlessly along the bottom of a deep ditch; and as he was not conscious of any mistake, he was unable to account for this unexpected move of the rabbit.

For some time he stood in this position, with his head raised, — the hind part of his body and the large, bushy tail hidden in the heather; and he began to question if perhaps it were the rabbits who were becoming wiser and the foxes more stupid every day.

But when the west wind had run some distance it became a north wind, later an east

wind, then a south wind; and at last it came again over the sea as a west wind, ran in between the sand-dunes on the coast, and sighed and moaned strangely in the heather.

But two gray eyes were missing in Krarup Inn. And the innkeeper's wife whimpered more than ever; she could not understand; nobody could understand — except Anders, the driver, and one besides.

But when the old people wanted to admonish the young seriously, it was their custom to begin thus: "There was once a girl in Krarup Inn by the name of Karen."

THE TORTURE BY HOPE

By Villiers de l'Isle Adam

IN the official dungeons of Saragossa, long ago, at nightfall, the aged Pedro Arbez d'Espila, sixth Dominican Prior of Segovia, third Grand Inquisitor of Spain, followed by a "brother of the redemption" (a master torturer), and preceded by two secret servants (familiars) of the Holy Office, bearing lanterns, descended toward a condemned cell. The lock of the massive door grated; and they made their way into a mephitic *in-pace*, where the lingering daylight from above revealed, between rings riveted to the wall, a rack black with blood, a chafing-dish, a pitcher. On a muck bed, shackled, an iron collar on his neck, sat a haggard man in tatters, of an age from henceforward never to be distinguished.

This prisoner was no other than Rabbi Aser Abarbanel, a Jew of Aragon, convicted of usury and pitiless disregard of the poor, who had for over a year been put upon the

rack daily. And yet, his "blindness being as hard as his hide," he had refused to abjure.

Proud of a stock dating back by the thousand years, boasting his ancient ancestry, — for all Jews worthy the name are jealous of their race, — he traced descent from Othniel, and consequently from Ipsibea, wife of this last judge of Israel, a circumstance which had sustained his courage beneath the hardest of his incessant tortures.

It was with tears in his eyes at the thought that so firm a soul should shut itself out from salvation that the aged Pedro Arbez d'Espila, approaching the trembling Rabbi, pronounced the following words:

"Rejoice, my son. Behold, your trials here below are about to end! If, in face of your stubbornness, I have felt it my duty to employ so much rigor, yet my task of fraternal correction has limits. You are the withered fig-tree which, so many times found barren, is cut down and cast into the fire. But God alone is able to judge your soul. Mayhap the Infinite Clemency will shine upon you at the supreme moment. We should trust so. There have been cases — so may it be! Rest, then, this evening in peace. You will take part to-morrow in the *auto-da-fé;* that is, you will be exposed to the *quemadero*, the

fire premonitory of eternal flames. It burns, as you know, only at a distance, my son, and death has at least two hours (often three) to come, because of the wet and ice-cold bandages with which we take care to shield the foreheads and hearts of the holocausts. There will be but forty-three of you. Remember that you, being placed in the last rank, will have time to invoke God and to offer Him that baptism by fire which is of the Holy Ghost. Trust, then, in the Light, and sleep."

While finishing this discourse, Don Arbez, having by a sign caused the wretch to be freed from his chains, embraced him tenderly. Then it was the turn of the brother of the redemption, who in a low voice begged the Jew to pardon him that to which he had submitted him in order to redeem him; then the two familiars embraced him, their kisses made silent by their hoods. This ceremony ended, the captive was left condemned and alone in the darkness.

* * *

Rabbi Aser Abarbanel, his mouth dry, his face stupefied with suffering, regarded, at first without exact attention, the closed door. "Closed?" That word quite unconsciously awakened within his confused thoughts a

dream. It was that for an instant he still beheld the light from the lanterns in the opening between the wall and the door. A morbid idea of hope, due to the enfeebling of his brain, possessed him. He dragged himself toward the unusual thing appearing. And very gently sliding a finger, with slow precaution, along the opening, he pulled the door toward him — oh, astounding! By an extraordinary chance the servant who had closed it had turned the great key a little before he had shut it to between the stone doorposts, so that the rusty bolt not having entered its socket, the door moved again when it was pushed.

The Rabbi risked a glance outside.

By means of a sort of livid obscurity, he distinguished at first a half-circle of earthy wall pierced by spiral stairs, and paramount, in front of him, five or six stone steps, a kind of black porch, giving access to a vast corridor of which he could perceive from below only the first arches.

Stretching himself along, he crawled to the level of this entrance. Yes, it was indeed a corridor, but of an immeasurable length. A wan light illumined it, glimmering as in a dream from the night-lamps hung from the vaulted roof and burning blue, at times, through the dull air. The distance beyond

was darkness. Not a door on the side in all the length! Only on one side, at his left, vent-holes barred with iron in recesses of the wall allowed the passage of a twilight which should be that of evening, from the redness of the rays striking from afar athwart the flagging. And what a frightful stillness! Nevertheless, below there, in the depths of that veiled gloom, an outlet might open upon liberty. The tremulous hope of the Jew was tenacious, for it was his last.

Without hesitating, then, he ventured across the pavement, skirting the wall by the vent-holes, striving to blend himself in with the shadowy tinge of the long walls. He advanced slowly, dragging himself on his breast, and keeping himself from crying out when a wound recently lacerated twinged.

Suddenly the sound of a sandal approaching reached him in the echo of the stone corridor. Shivers shook him; anxiety suffocated him; his sight dimmed. So, then, all was ended, doubtless. He effaced himself, crouching on his haunches in a recess, and waited, half-dead.

It was a familiar of the Inquisition hurrying by. He passed rapidly, a thumb-screw in his grip, his hood lowered, terrible, — and disappeared. The seizure whose constraint the Rabbi had suffered having, as it

were, suspended the functions of life, he remained for nearly an hour unable to make a stir. Fearing increased torture if he were seized, the idea came to him to go back into his hole. But the old hope whispered in his soul, the divine "perhaps" which comforts the worst distress. A miracle was to occur. He could no longer doubt it. He set himself then to creep toward the possible escape. Attenuated by hunger and suffering, trembling with anguish, he advanced. The sepulchral corridor seemed to lengthen mysteriously; and he himself, never finishing his advance, seemed to gaze forever at the shadows down there, where there ought to be salvation.

Oh, oh! Steps sound again, but this time slower and more hopeless. Shapes white and black, with long hats with rolled brims, appear before him, two inquisitors emerging upon the dull air down below. They chat in a low voice, and seem to be in controversy upon some important point, for their hands are gesticulating.

At this sight Rabbi Aser Abarbanel shut his eyes; his heart beat as if to kill him; his rags were saturated with the cold sweat of his agony; he remained gaping, motionless, stretched the length of the wall under the rays of a lamp, praying the God of David.

Having arrived opposite to him, the two inquisitors stopped under the light of the lamp, this, by a chance, doubtless, growing out of their discussion. One of them, while listening to his interlocutor, found himself regarding the Rabbi. And beneath this look, whose abstracted expression he did not at first comprehend, the unfortunate Rabbi believed he felt the warm pincers bite his poor flesh again: he was going again then to become a wail and a wound! Faltering, not able to breathe, his eyeballs pulsing, he shivered at the grazing of that robe. But — thing both strange and natural — the eyes of the inquisitor were evidently those of a man deeply preoccupied with what he is going to reply, absorbed by the idea to which he was listening. The pupils were fixed, and seemed to regard the Jew without seeing him.

In fact, after some minutes, the two sinister disputants pursued their way by slow steps, and still talking in a low voice, toward the central passage whence the captive had escaped. *They had not seen him!* In the horrible disarray of his sensations the idea crossed his brain, "Am I already dead, that they do not see me?"

A hideous impression roused him from his lethargy. While looking at the wall close

by his own face, he thought he saw, opposite his own, two ferocious eyes observing him. He drew back his head in a sudden and desperate fright, his hair on end. But no, no! His hand, feeling the stones, brought him a true account: it was the reflection of the inquisitor's eyes that he had yet on his retina, and that he had refracted upon two spots on the wall.

On, then! He must hasten toward the end that he imagined (morbidly, no doubt) to be deliverance — toward those shadows from which he was distant no more than about thirty steps; again he took, more quickly, on his knees, on his hands, on his belly, his dolorous way; and soon he entered the darkest part of this frightful corridor. All at once the wretch felt cold *upon* his hands, which were resting on the flags; that was to be accounted for by a violent draught of air rushing under a little door on which the two walls abutted. Ah, God! if that door should open outdoors! His whole frame broke loose into a vertigo of hope. He examined it from top to bottom without being able to determine surely in the gloom around him. He felt. No bolts, no lock! A latch! He tried it. The latch yielded under his thumb; the silent door opened before him.

* * *

"Alleluia!" murmured the Rabbi, with an immense sigh of relief and thanks, now standing on the sill in sight of what appeared before him.

The door had opened upon a garden, beneath a starry night, upon spring, liberty, life! Thence the country beyond extended toward the Sierras, whose sinuous blue lines were silhouetted on the horizon. There salvation was! Oh, to flee thither! He would run all night under the citron woods whose perfume reached him. Once in the mountains he would be safe. He breathed the good, blessed air; the wind reanimated him; his lungs revived. He heard in his dilated heart the "Come forth!" of Lazarus. And that he might bless God again, who had accorded him this mercy, he stretched out his arms before him, raising his eyes to the sky. It was ecstasy.

Then he thought he saw the shadow of his own arms turn back upon himself; he thought he felt those shadowy arms surround him, enlace him, and that he was pressed tenderly against a breast. A tall form was, indeed, near him. Confidingly he cast his eyes upon it, and stood gasping, doting, dejected, throbbing, his cheeks distended, drivelling with fright.

Horror! he was in the arms of the Grand

Inquisitor himself, the venerable Pedro Arbez d'Espila, who gazed upon him with his eyes full of big tears, and with the air of a good shepherd finding again his lost sheep.

The gloomy priest pressed the luckless Jew to his heart with an outburst of affection so fervent that the points of the monkish hair-cloth under the frock pricked the Dominican's chest; and while Rabbi Aser Abarbanel, his eyes drawn up under his lids, was convulsed with anguish in the arms of the ascetic Don Arbez, understanding confusedly that all the incidents of that evening were but a prepared torture, — the torture by hope! — the Grand Inquisitor, with an accent of poignant reproach and a glance of consternation, murmured in his ear, with ardor heightened by fasting, —

"Eh! what, my child? On the evening, perhaps, of salvation, you would, then, leave us?"

THE PHŒNIX

By Auguste Strindberg

IT was strawberry time when he saw her first at the Parsonage. He had seen many maidens before, but the instant he saw her he felt that she was destined for him. If he were to declare his love for her! Ah! he did not dare. He was still only a schoolboy. Soon, however, when he returned as a student, he ventured to kiss her. How that made him feel! A storm of sky-rockets flashed before his eyes, in his ears bells pealed and hunting-horns sounded, and under his feet the earth trembled.

Karin was only fourteen; but her girlish bosom swelled attractively, as if already covetous of motherhood. Her step was elastic and swinging. Her hair flowed from her forehead in a torrent of gold. Her eyes glowed, and her skin was as smooth and soft as a glove.

The betrothed pair kissed each other like birds, in the garden, in the fields, and in the

wood. Life lay blissfully before them like a smooth-mown meadow.

Before they could mate, though, he must pass his examination as mining engineer, and that would take ten years, including a journey abroad for study. Yes, ten years!

He studied at Upsala, but he spent the summer at the Parsonage. During the first three years Karin's charm remained unchanged; but when he returned the fourth summer he found her grown pale. There were little red rims about the corners of her nose, and her beautiful bosom looked shrunken. The sixth summer after their engagement, she had to take iron and go to the springs for her health. Later, she suffered from toothache and nervousness. Her hair seemed to have lost its natural gloss, her voice no longer rang clear, and her step lost its elasticity. That winter she had a nervous fever. Her hair had to be cut off, and when it grew again it was gray.

He had fallen in love with a blonde fourteen-year-old maiden; he never could bear brunettes. And now he married a little gray woman of four-and-twenty. Yet in spite of that he still loved her; not indeed so tempestuously as at first, for he also had grown older, and more staid and quiet.

There was nothing in the little mining-town

where they lived to disturb his happiness. Twin boys were born to them. The husband was anxious to have a daughter; and the next child was a little fair-haired girl, her father's darling. She thrived and grew to be more and more the exact counterpart of her mother when first he met her. Her father devoted his whole free time to her.

The mother took care of the house meanwhile. Her hands became red and rough with work, her back bent from stooping everlastingly over the cooking-stove. Husband and wife seldom met save at dinner and at night. There was never any quarrelling, and yet it was no longer as it had been.

The daughter grew and bloomed, to the daily delight of her father. One would almost have said he was in love with her. In her he saw her mother recreated — the mother whose beauty had so quickly faded, but which had blossomed anew in the daughter. He was almost bashful before her. She was his idol.

One morning she was ailing, and did not get up. Her mother took it to be a case of stay-at-home-from-school fever, but her father sent at once for the doctor. She was really ill with diphtheria. The angel of death had come to visit her. It was necessary for one of the parents to take flight with the other

children. The father could not make up his mind to leave her, so the mother had to take both the boys into the country while the father stayed with the daughter.

There had to be fumigating with sulphur till all the gold in the house and the silver toilet things became black. The father was beside himself. He paced to and fro through the empty rooms. Lying alone at night in his great bed it seemed to him as if he were a widower.

He bought all sorts of playthings for the poor invalid. She smiled to see them; and he sat upon the edge of her bed and played Punch and Judy to amuse her. She asked after her mother and brothers longingly. One day she would not even look at the Punch-and-Judy show, and her smile faded. Then she lost speech. Death came and choked her with his long bony arms. The struggle was hard.

The mother came back reproaching herself, and conscience-stricken that she had left her child. There was mourning and lamentation. The doctor wished to make a *post-mortem* examination, but the father would not suffer it. They should not hurt her. For him she was not dead. Still it had to be, though the father meanwhile wished to strike and bite the surgeon.

When they gave her to earth, he raised a monument to her, and every morning that God let dawn he visited her grave. The second year he did so less often. He had affairs that occupied him, and his time was full. The older he grew, the heavier cares fell upon him. His step was not light now. At times he was ashamed of himself that he did not grieve more, but he forgot it all again shortly after.

Two more daughters came, but none like her. Irretrievable and not to be replaced, she had gone. What a thing is life! The gilding had gone from the young wife, from the wife who was once so glorious; and the gilding was gone from the household once so glittering. The silver wedding-presents the young wife had received had been destroyed by the children; the beds were worn out, the chairs broken, the stuffing bulged from the torn sofa. The piano had stood for years unopened. The crying of children had taken the place of singing, and the unused voices had grown rough. Pet names had been laid aside with the children's old clothes. Caresses resembled massage. They both seemed old and weary. Papa no longer fell upon his knees before mamma, but sat in a comfortable easy-chair and let her hand him the matches to light his pipe. Yes; they had grown old.

When he was fifty years old she died. Then the old recollections mounted within him; and when his wife's body was remanded to earth the daughter's burial surged up into memory, and he mourned her afresh who had so long been lost to him. Remorse followed. Yet, although the fourteen-year-old maiden of the Parsonage had never been his, and he had gained only the bloodless woman of four-and-twenty, he had always been gentle to his wife. He had lain upon his knees before her, had been true to her, had offered her devotion. To be frank, the good care and management of the wife had its share in the loss he bemoaned; still there was something more and altogether different. His relations with his children became more intimate now. Some of the brood, indeed, had taken flight, but the rest were still at home.

After he had wearied his friends with the biography of the departed one for a whole year, something remarkable happened: he chanced to meet a maiden who was blonde and eighteen years old, who exactly resembled his wife at fourteen. This meeting seemed to him a token of heaven's favor, which at last would yield him his first heart's desire. He fell in love with her because she resembled his first love, and he married

again. But the children, especially the girls, showed themselves unfriendly towards the new mother. They thought something unclean rested upon this alliance — that their father had become unfaithful to their own mother.

He was happy and proud that so young a girl was willing to have him. "Straw fire," said his old friends.

After a year a child was born. The papa had grown unaccustomed to a baby's crying, and wanted to sleep, so he took another room. The young wife wept over this. He had been foolish enough, during the engagement, to say she was like his wife, and she had ventured, thereupon, to read their old love-letters. She remembered them now that she was more left to herself. She fancied all the love-names had descended to her from his first wife, and that she was nothing, so to speak, but a substitute. That spurred her on to perpetrate all sorts of silly schemes in order to win him, personally, for herself. This wearied him; and when he came to institute a closer comparison between the two wives it turned out much to the discredit of the young one. She was not so gentle; she exasperated his nerves. He felt, moreover, a yearning for his children, whom his second marriage had driven from

the house. Troubled thoughts harassed him.

He came to think that he had been untrue to his dead wife. It no longer seemed to him homelike at home. He looked upon himself as foolish; what he had done he would gladly have left undone. He took to frequenting the tavern.

Then she began to storm. He had deceived her. He was an "old stork." But he would better take care. So old a man would do well not to leave his young wife alone; it might prove dangerous.

Old! Was he really so old? He would show her.

Ah! it was not so with his first wife. He grew despondent. Twice he had believed that the phœnix had arisen from the ashes of the fourteen-year-old maiden of his youth — first in his daughter, then in his second wife. Now, only his first wife lived in his memory, the maiden at the Parsonage whom he had loved in strawberry time, under the linden and in the wood, — she whom he had never obtained. Now, as he went down the hill, as his days were numbered, in his dark hours he saw nothing but the image of his first wife, who always had been kind to him and to his children. Ugly indeed, but continually standing in the kitchen, cooking, mending the boys' trousers and the girls' petticoats;

and when the glamour of the second honeymoon was over, and his eyes again saw clear, he wondered if the true phœnix, springing calm and beautiful from the ashes of the golden bird of fourteen, had not been his own wife, after all. The true phœnix had laid her eggs, plucked the down from her own breast for the sake of her young, and nourished them with her own blood until she fell to earth.

He meditated long upon this; and when at length he lay down his weary head never again to uplift it, it had become a certainty to him.

MILTON'S DAUGHTERS

By Villiers de l'Isle Adam

SUDDENLY, without otherwise changing her pose, the young girl lifted her eyes, her gaze intent and suffused with a gentle but poignant melancholy; then in a languishing voice said:

"Mother, when a man grown feeble, his spirit worn and his temper intractable, is no longer in a condition to be useful to himself or any one else; when his senile vanity, whose self-sufficiency makes every observer smile, seems to increase on the approach of second childhood — is it then a wicked prayer to ask God to have pity upon him, even to recall him as soon as possible to light — to eternal life?"

The old woman, without replying, turned her head away with a shudder.

"Indeed, dreams come to me, dangerous ones," continued Deborah Milton, in the same soft, clear, lingering voice, "when I scarcely contain myself sometimes from fleeing

hence, so that I may return bringing you aid, mother; offering you bread and fire. What matters the price I should have paid for them?"

"Hush! God forbid! Attain salvation by faith, through trial, and never murmur. That is all that is needful."

"I am but twenty years old; perhaps you forget that a little, mother."

"To-morrow — you will be my age — you will see — if you live so long."

"To-night is not to-morrow."

"Silence!"

A pause. Then, "You are fair; you will marry some young lord. Take heart, my daughter."

At this, Deborah Milton arose coldly and remained standing, chill and severe. "A young lord! Ah! I will not laugh here, within these blood-stained walls. Who among nobles would have for wife the daughter of an old breadless rhymester who voted for his King's death? I do not even hope for — a poor minister of God, whom the risk of meeting the coldness of the least of the subjects of Charles II. would turn away from seeking my hand."

"Your father did his duty according to his conscience."

"Austere men should dispense with having children," the young girl murmured.

"Deborah! You are cruel to others than him."

"Oh, pardon, mother!" She struck the bare table with her slight fist. "It is all horrible. Always visions! Heaven, angels, demons, like shapes in clouds! The strain they speak in, with its trappings of bells of sonorous metre, makes the reality they represent doubtful; and they silence actual reality. It was, indeed, worth the pain of becoming blind to see so many hollow phantoms appear at the depths of eternal darkness. Faith denies itself in a phrase too well balanced, attracting attention to itself and turning the mind aside from that which it declares. Say 'I believe!' and that is enough. To paint Heaven and Hell! And the earthly Paradise! And the story of the unhappy pair of beings from whom we are all descended! O insupportable tinkling of empty words! vain labor! And we, my sister and I, must needs harness ourselves to the load; dumb mutes, to write out these irrational wanderings — to wait an hour at a time for verses that often must be scratched out; and when we fall asleep over our paper we must awake, fasting sometimes, and must speed the pen, and always everlastingly put black on white, and throw away on *that* our cancelled youth; while

down there in London are good roofs, well-served tables, and fine young men, who would give you a charming welcome." She stopped herself.

"Evil thoughts! Be resigned!"

"Words! You are hungry, I am hungry; that is the truth."

"He is hungry too, and does not complain, and he suffers the more to know you are suffering distress which he has caused."

"Nonsense! Two things feed him, pride and faith. Poets are beings who take an abstraction for an end, to the scorn of their families and to the suffering of all about them. Nothing harms them. They are in the depths of their dreams. O vanity! To think that he imagines that this 'Paradise Lost' will endure in the memory of posterity. The bookseller will not give him for it what the paper cost, and which he prefers instead of bread for us. We shall be in rags soon; but he is blind, and it is of his verses, not his daughters, that he is proud. And cross enough to beat us! No, it is too much; I will obey no longer."

"What would you have him do?"

"No longer exist. Then one could change one's name, leave this country, live. My sister is pretty and I am beautiful; what then?"

"And your honor, child. How you talk!"

"The honor of the daughters of an old regicide — of a man who took part in killing him who alone gave a meaning to that word 'honor'? You joke, mother. We have a right to honesty; that is all. One inherits everything good or bad from one's parents. We should be pitied for pronouncing that word 'honor' before those who have the right to judge, and to whose judgment alone one ought to hold."

"You speak as he would speak if he thought as you do. But there are men who would smile at what you say."

"They themselves would only be liars, which would excuse me from trying to convince them, from suffering by their blame or being proud of their praise. Look at them: they are blank, and that is all!"

"I have an idea that perhaps we could borrow some money, no matter how little, from Mr. Lindson. We have never asked him for anything like that."

"Yes; I believe he is trying not to know us any more, and does not dare to be so cowardly without some pretext. He would lend us, sure of not being paid back, and that would excuse him for not seeing us again. You are right. Would you like me to go alone or with you? No longer recognize us!

He could buy that right on good terms — two crowns, I guess."

The old woman, looking out of the window, —

"There is only Mr. Lindson. It might be done."

"I will go to him."

Emma enters, carrying a heavy bundle of dead wood. "There!"

Emma Milton ran to the cupboard, opened it, fumbled among the earthenware plates, and closed it again, shutting the two doors violently.

"How! Nothing? Where is the bread?"

Silence.

"Your sister has gone in hope to be able to get some."

"Ah! has the bookseller given anything?"

"No, it is to Mr. Lindson she has gone to borrow."

"Yes; but it is not certain that he will lend anything."

Deborah comes in again.

"Two shillings!"

The old woman hides her face, after a time saying, "It is God who gives. Let us thank Him for His mercy and rest on Him. He will give us more for the morrow."

"It is almost alms," said Emma.

"No," said Deborah, "it is less; I can tell you that."

"Give it to me; I will go and get something to eat."

Emma goes out.

Milton appears. The old man was feeling his way along the wall with the end of his cane. His countenance, deeply lined, was worn with grief, his brow furrowed by three long straight wrinkles, his eyes fixed and lustreless. There was a mystical nobleness in the moulding of his face, and his long white locks, parted in the middle, fell on either side of his massive sallow throat, with its two knotted glands. He wore an old doublet and hose of chestnut-colored velvet, buckled shoes, and a Puritan hat that dated from the days of Cromwell.

He enters.

"You are there, are you not?" said he.

No one replied to him at first. "Yes, my friend," said the old woman. Deborah shrugged her shoulders. Emma smiled.

"See here! But write legibly, or I — Above all, do not change the words that come to me, and do not interrupt me if I do not stop myself. You have a habit of whispering over words that seem to me fit, which, when you say them, astonish me, and which sound empty when you read them over.

The word which does not seem fit when isolated is often the most exact if it arises from the context; for really there are no such things as words. He only is a poet who cannot but bay out his thought magnificently, roar it out sometimes, thunder often. But one never hears that save in tempests. So much the worse for those who do not understand the language of the country from whence in my verse blows the wind of eternity.

"And to devote oneself to marking off the purring of the metre, to the symbols, phrases, turns of sense, the movement of the thought, it all amounts to nothing without wisdom — and so with a little facility they do not copy: they ape. They make any, no matter what, inanity serve — it will pass to oblivion; but to-day attention is arrested upon the work from whence issues the vacuous bubble; and the only work paid for! — for the hollow world pays for and esteems only the empty. No matter! Thought alone will live: forms change and quickly grow out of fashion; thought alone will live — for at the bottom of things there are neither words nor phrases, no, nor anything but that which animates those veils. Thought alone will reappear. The impression of the work alone will remain. Beside these make-believe poets

I am like a living soul among the dead, a man among apes, a lion gnawed by rats. Jesus Christ has shown me my road; I know how men greet a god. I shall have the fate of the prophets. I will resign myself to that which men mock at in me, my poverty, for if I were rich — ah! how great a poet they would find me; the rival, at the least, of Mr. Tom Craik, author of — the immortal name escapes me.

"My God! what a pain I have in my stomach. It is a little hunger, maybe. Well, that is nothing. Besides, you are fasting, too, my daughters. For, if I recollect, there is nothing left, is there? Then give thanks to God! for the saints ate little. Ridicule is less painful than the indigestion of those whose miserable frolics rob us of what is needful. Write! Why do you say nothing? Are you only there?"

"We pity them for having been brutes enough to make themselves ill by laughing at our fasting. Each to his fate! They are people who find nothing more amusing than to bewitch the bread away from their brothers, to jeer when they see them grow thin for lack of food. Only one thing they forget — that it is as ridiculous to die of surfeit as of hunger, of obesity as of emaciation, and that *they* die without laughter, even from us."

"My daughters, stop, I pray you, I beg of you! Do not make me speak any more of anything but — obey me! I am your father. Stop! see me here at your knees."

"Father, see how excited you are! Is what you do reasonable? In the face of such acts, how are we to think that you can exercise the good sense necessary to dictate anything readable for the time? Believe us, it is for the sake of your fame that we beg you to go to bed and rest yourself."

"Ah, cruel child! Be thou — No, I will curse no one, not even she who — Know that it is the breath of God. O murmurs of God's breath! O misery of divine humility! One must have the good-will of these silly women to be able to hear the breath of God in verse."

But the daughters were not always rebels against the irascible old man. Sometimes, feeling along in the darkness, he would reach the back of a chair near the table, seat himself, resting upon his elbows and shutting his eyes.

Then the voice of Milton, slow and sublime, would come forth:

"Hail, holy light! offspring of Heaven, first-born"—

It was a text unknown to posterity, an outburst of images and thoughts symbolized with

broad gleams of light, and the voice, unmindful of the night-hour, rang out, vibrating, deep, melodious. With the inspiration an angel passed by, the quivering of whose wings one seemed to be able to distinguish in the sacred words he uttered; and the crests of the trees of Eden lighted by lost auroras; and the morning song of Eve, kneeling beside the first fountains, before Adam, serious and frank, adoring in silence; and the blue gleams of the serpent twisting its folds about the forbidden tree; and the look of the first temptress of our race — ah! all that sang beneath the transfiguring voice of the old seer.

At the sound of these accents, whose breath seemed fetched from beyond the earth, the three women, in night toilets and the disarray of the first sleep they had just arisen from, one of them holding a lamp which she shielded with her hands from the wind in the darkness, appeared at the door of the room where in the solitude, deep in shadow, the seer was speaking of divine things. To the drawers. Thence to the table. Then in low voices: "No more paper." "What a pen!" "It is nothing but a beak."

"Father, we are here! We are trying to write, but you go too fast; we cannot follow. What you say sounds very well this time, I declare. If you would but begin over

again without rushing so, and speak slowly. Perhaps" —

After a long silence and a deep shudder, Milton would reply in a low voice, with a sigh, "Ah! it is too late; I have forgotten."

NEWTON'S BRAIN

By Jakub Arbes

I WANT to tell an amusing story and yet begin at a grave. It is cynical; but I hope that after a few words of explanation even tender souls will forgive me.

Severe and implacable Science has robbed many of us of the sweetest dream of life; her cruel hand has torn asunder that veil which has covered the destiny of living beings after death, and a dreadful, but more or less clear, perspective opens to every one who trusts to her proofs, instead of to old traditional, though pleasant, prejudices.

Why, then, should we lament at the grave of a man who believed — nay, what is more, who was convinced — that all that blesses or grieves us ends with death? Why mourn the death of a man who disliked sorrow?

The man of whom I speak had been a friend of mine from his early youth, and died — or, more correctly, was killed — in the battle of Königgrätz, as an officer of Prince

Konstantin's regiment. A Prussian sabre cut his skull in two.

His father was manager of Prince Kinský's garden. We were remote relations; and although my friend's family was quite rich, while mine was poor, we lived in most intimate friendship for almost twenty years. We played together in childhood and studied together in boyhood.

Our life and studies were as peculiar as our inclinations. At first we busied ourselves with everything that came into our hands: we examined, analyzed, and discussed whatever chance would bring us. Our debates were lively — nay, impassioned. But the exchange of strange, often eccentric opinions was pleasing and tempting; and there was not a single day, perhaps, that we did not debate something seemingly beyond solution. This thoughtless, desultory study naturally had no practical ends; but it developed our dialectics and inflamed our fancy, which often performed real wonders in the world of the *bizarre*.

To the no small grief of our fathers, neither I nor my friend was very proficient at school.

In our "private" studies, however, — that is, in those sciences which we loved above all, — we excelled all our fellow-students. Nature had endowed me with ugliness and

my friend with beauty, and our inclinations were similarly dissimilar: I liked dry and tiresome mathematics, whereas he preferred the fresh and noble natural sciences. But we were so far from a true scientific course that I really do not know whether I should not regard all we studied then as mere play.

There was, however, some definite end in my friend's studies. He studied mainly physics, chemistry, mechanics, and a few kindred branches, — but all with a view to *escamotage*. God knows when and where he conceived the idea of having special talents for *escamotage;* but from that time nothing interested him unless it had some connection with his hobby. In all his doings he aimed at acquiring skill in that playful pseudo-science, as he called it; and from his favorite sciences he picked out only what was related to it.

His father knew nothing about it, for he worked in secret. I was his only confidential friend, and it was in my room that the most varied experiments were performed. Every single penny that he could earn or get he turned toward buying magical tools, or books on *escamotage;* all of which he deposited in my room. In a few years there were so many curious instruments and appliances heaped within this narrow precinct that it

looked very much like the study of a mediæval alchemist.

Pursuing his hobby with zeal, my friend made such rapid progress in *escamotage* as showed that he was really very gifted. But the more he prospered in it the more his passion grew; and thus it often happened that while I was busy figuring out how high, under certain conditions, a balloon of a certain weight filled with one or another gas must rise, only a few feet from me my friend was repeating for the thousandth time a trifling experiment — how, at a moment's notice, to throw a given card out of a pack.

Oftentimes he would experiment in my absence, and then surprise me with many a clever piece of work. His labors were never superficial, and he despised common jugglery. His secret lay in aptly combining various mechanical, chemical, and physical effects. Statics and dynamics, optics with its branches, acoustics, magnetism, electricity, synthetical and analytical chemistry, — all these and in part other sciences also, as astronomy, anatomy, physiology, were mastered by him with an unusual earnestness in the course of seven or eight years; but all with a view to *escamotage*.

He bought every book or pamphlet, no matter how trifling, which dealt with *escamo-*

tage or kindred matters, as magic, alchemy, astrology, magnetism, and somnambulism, mystics, chiromancy, and the like. His library, which, like his instruments, he kept in my room, was an odd collection. Beside books of actual value, works of famous *savants* like Newton, Linné, Locke, Leibnitz, Bacon, Arago, Wolf, Lavoisier, Cartesius, Brown, Mohs, Cuvier, Humboldt, etc., you might see books of unknown or forgotten pseudo-scientists and charlatans; *e.g.*, "Ten Books on the Secrets of Nature," by Paracelsus Bombastus, published in Strasburg in 1570; or Mehnu's "Mirror of Alchemy;" Böckmann's "Archives of Magnetism and Somnambulism;" Cagliostro's "Adventures;" Commiers's "Les Oracles des Sybilles," published about a hundred years ago; Crusius's work on Schroepfer's art of summoning spirits; Wincer's "Demonology," and many other like works. But the clear mind of my friend was elevated above that enormous mass of men's errors. He studied those strange books rather from curiosity than for use, although he was well aware that knowledge of such mental aberrations might assist him in strengthening natural delusions.

His work was not only thorough, but also independent. He not only learned known experiments, but invented new ones, and

through systematical efforts endeavored to place his pseudo-science upon a broad and secure basis. No wonder, then, that later his performances surpassed all expectations. His elegant appearance, his eloquence, a light and even sarcastic wit, and a technical skill acquired through many years' training served him well in the most difficult experiments. As evidence of his skill, I shall mention a few out of many hundreds of more or less familiar experiments which I have myself seen: swallowing burning tar and stones, drawing threads and ribbons out of one's mouth, thrusting a knife into one's breast, are mostly feats of obsolete jugglery; but he knew how to perform these and other tricks so well that he could rival the most famous magician.

At the wedding feast of one of my relatives he once performed an original and pretty experiment: we were seated at a long table, in the centre of a spacious hall. There were about twelve persons in all. The bride was sitting at the head of the table, the bridegroom beside her, then the bridesmaid and the groomsman. I sat opposite the bridesmaid; my friend was at the other end of the table, about nine feet from the bride. We were in gay spirits. The menu was excellent, and joke and jest soon ruled the field of talk. When the feast was near its end a

large deep dish of boiled crabs was served and placed before the bride. But she either did not fancy that dish or was too mindful of etiquette; for she asked the groom to pass it on. He obeyed, and the dish passed from hand to hand until it came, though nearly empty, back to the bride. Only small crabs were left, and seeing that the groom had not yet been served, the bride was about to pick out for him one or two of the best that were left; she bowed her head a little, looked over the dish with her pretty blue eyes, and seized the largest crab. But hardly had she put it on the groom's plate when she shrieked in terror and pushed back from the table: from the plate there looked at her a loathsome toad.

"What's that?" the bridegroom cried out, and stabbed the creature with his fork. The toad leaped from the plate upon the table in front of the bride. All the guests showed surprise; but my friend, quietly sitting at the other end of the table, said, "Why do you stab the little unfortunate?" Then he arose and touched the toad, which leaped over the bride's head toward the door.

The bridegroom jumped from his seat, and with one foot trod upon it. To the amazement of all it moaned in a human voice, "Alas, now I am dead!" The groom stepped

back, my friend stooped to the floor and, instead of a toad, picked up a snow-white glove. Taking the bride's handkerchief, he wrapped the glove in it, and, placing the handkerchief before the bride, he murmured, like the famous Bosco, the magic Italian formula, "*Spiriti miei, ubbidite!*" And when one of the guests had unfolded the handkerchief he found there a pair of choice gold ear-rings — my friend's gift to the bride.

To prove the death of a sparrow, pigeon, hare, mole, or some other little animal, and then with a penknife cautiously to take out its brain from the skull, replace it with a perfumed piece of cotton, and then to order the animal slowly to wake up to life as though it were reviving from a swoon, and afterward to jump up and fly or flee away, is a feat of *escamotage* well enough known; but my friend would perform it in so many ways that it interested even those spectators who had many times seen like experiments.

I should need a thick book to exhaust his repertory; but from the few examples I have mentioned it will be seen that he could honorably compete with the most skilful conjurors. His main efforts, however, were directed toward summoning spirits. His apparatus and the means he employed were concealed even from me. Once he told me if I wished to

see any historical personage that he would call him. I named Napoleon I.

Several nights had passed, but Napoleon did not put in an appearance; once, however, after I had forgotten the promise of my friend, I was awakened from sleep by a gentle tapping at my door. Rising, I rubbed my eyes; but as the tapping was repeated I asked, "Who is there?" No one answered; the door quietly opened, and in stepped, with a grave gait, Napoleon I., just as I had oftentimes seen him pictured, — in a gray coat, white breeches, with high riding-boots and the historical three-cornered hat. Silently he walked to the window, and back to the door. I wanted to address the vision, but did not; and as a curiosity I must confess that to this day I do not know *why* I did not.

I did not see more experiments of this kind. Whenever I wished anything like it my friend always referred me to some later time when he would have all the necessary apparatus and be better skilled. Sometimes he told me that he was engaged in constructing automatons, with the aid of which he expected to perform real "miracles," and delude entire companies of *savants* and scientists. He intended to invite a considerable number of friends and lovers of this kind of amusement, and to perform experiments of

the most complicated and intricate kinds. He assured me that I would really be surprised; and, taking all I saw into account, I could readily judge that he would fulfil his word.

We lived and studied thus for several years. Our study — many-sided at first, afterward one-sided — was not fruitless. Shortly before 1860 our records were so low that we had to stay another year in the same class. We stayed; and at the end of the year we failed again, and next year we failed the third time. The father of my friend, who often jokingly threatened to apprentice his son to a cobbler if he continued to fail, finally lost all patience, and, in a family conference, it was decreed that the best thing for him to do would be to become a soldier. He did not object, and a short time afterward called on me dressed in the uniform of a cadet of the foot regiment of Prince Konstantin of Russia.

"Well, what are *you* doing?" he inquired, shaking hands with me.

"I am going to be a carpenter."

"Forever?"

"I do not know; I am practising now, or, in other words, I am entered as an apprentice, although I have not yet had an axe in my hands."

"And probably you never will have one,"

laughed the young candidate of a bloody trade.

"Maybe," I replied; "and probably your hands will never touch any of your magic tools any more!"

"Far from it! I have just come to rid you of this rubbish. Why, you can hardly move here!"

"Very well. But where shall we put it?"

"To-morrow I shall send several boxes; you will help me to pack them. I shall have them secretly delivered in the cellars of the Prince's castle; and should I ever — when I feel lonesome in Trieste or Pesth, or some Catholic village of the Tyrol, you know — well, then I shall write to you, and you will look up the necessary instruments and send them to me."

I promised to do so. The next day we filled no less than five large boxes with books, apparatus, and other magicians 'trash. On the following day the boxes were carried away. We saw each other several more times; but two or three weeks afterward he was ordered to leave for Königgrätz, the seat of his regiment. From then on I was lonely. My friend did not write, nor did I; and thus our formerly indissoluble friendship ended with mutual, though only seeming, indifference.

* * *

Two years later — I believe it was in January or February of 1866 — my friend sent me a letter. He told me various incidents of his life, recalled the "folly" of his studies, and, asking me to reply soon, concluded thus:

> Do you know the phrase "Let pleasure live"? If you do not, you would learn to know it in its full extent if you were an officer of the same regiment with me. I should never ask for jollier comrades or a more pleasant life. Only sometimes, — sometimes only, understand, — when the last days of the month have come and the salary has gone, I feel rather melancholy. Several times I thought how I might prevent this, but never ventured to follow my wishes, and therefore I beg you now, write me if you know of any one who would be as crazy now as I was years ago. Possibly he might purchase either all or a part at least of my tools and instruments, which I have stored in the cellars of Prince Kinský's villa.

I did not expect such a conclusion of the letter. Knowing his passion for his favorite pursuit, I could not believe that he had freed himself altogether from it; and thinking that this was either a momentary fancy or an *escamoteur's* attempt to deceive me, I simply replied that I knew of no one who would buy that which he offered for sale.

A partial proof, at least, that I was not mistaken was his second letter. He declared that after all his endeavors to forsake and forget his folly, *escamotage*, he could not

but try if he could rid himself of his passion by selling his apparatus; but that as soon as he sent the letter he felt sorry for having written it, and he added that even in case a purchaser had been found he would not have sold his instruments. In times of leisure, he wrote, he always thought of constructing his automatons; and he assured me that if his exhibition of them should ever take place it would be magnificent.

Shortly before the Austro-Prussian war was declared, I received one more letter from my friend — the last one. It was again written in a gay, almost frivolous tone. I give here the following passage:

> In a few days, perhaps, we shall be ordered to go to the battlefield. Pity your unhappy friend. Without any apparatus, cards, mirrors, tinctures, and other necessaries, he will have to murmur, "*Spiriti miei, ubbidite!*" and the "spirits," always obedient, will, mayhap, for the first time refuse obedience. In the midst of a rain of bullets a small piece of lead is more powerful than magic *formulæ*, and my sword and my revolver will, perhaps, make many a one familiar with the mysterious truth that no human power can. Eh! why fall into sentimentality? Sooner or later each of us will learn, as have those innumerable millions of creatures who have preceded us, whether life ends with death. Why this useless philosophizing? When the last fierce struggle shall come, I shall, perhaps, mournfully beg, "*Spiriti miei, ubbidite!*" or, it may be, I shall not think of my "*spiriti*" at all.

Yet there is one thing I beg of you: should I get killed, don't mourn! Call our old friends together, and then think of me with cups of wine in your hands. If you grant this request, you may be sure that, even after that, I shall once more at least call on you.

Reading the last lines I smiled as we smile at a paradox.

From then on I heard nothing more of my friend until after the battle of Königgrätz. Just before the complete stoppage of the mails I received the following letter:

DEAR SIR: A young officer, a first lieutenant of the Königgrätz regiment, has to-day been brought to our town. He is severely wounded, — his skull is cut in two, — and he is constantly beside himself. He was found this morning, about an hour's journey hence, in a gorge, whither he seems to have crawled after being wounded. His identity has not yet been established; but I hope it will be either to-day or to-morrow. In a letter found in his pocket I found your address, and send you this sad news so that you may inform his relatives and friends.

Respectfully yours,

P. VOJTA NOSAL,

Parson, Nechanice.

Travelling through regions occupied by the Prussian army was neither easy nor pleasant; still, I decided at once to leave for Nechanice. I wrote a note to my friend's father, and enclosing the Parson's letter sent it by a

messenger; then, without waiting for a reply, I took a train for Kolin, and thence proceeded to Nechanice in a coach. I arrived at two o'clock in the morning. Prussian guards stopped the coach before the town. I told them where I was going, and a soldier was ordered to accompany me to the Parsonage. In a few minutes the coach stopped before the Parson's house; I rang the bell, a man opened the gate, heard the reason for my coming, and went to announce me to the Parson, just come back from tending a Saxon officer who lay dying in the church with other wounded soldiers. The Parson welcomed me politely, and, rejecting as politely my excuse for disturbing him so late, he led me to the upper floor, where he had his drawing-room and several other rooms arranged to receive the wounded. "His name has not yet been ascertained," the Parson said, as he opened the door; "but I hope you will recognize him."

We entered. The room was half dark. Along the walls there lay about twenty soldiers on improvised beds on the floor; several bedsteads bearing those severely wounded stood near the windows. The Parson led me to one of these, and silently raised the light. The head of the wounded man was surrounded with ice. I looked into

his pale face, and at once recognized my friend. He was still beside himself: there he lay motionless, with his eyes half shut, and his heavy breath was the only sign of life.

"It is three days now," the Parson whispered, "since he was brought hither, and the physicians give up all hope. They recommend quiet, ice, and quinine."

I was going to speak to my friend; but seeing his hard struggle I turned away, and we left the room. In the hall I thanked the Parson for his kindness, and was about to go; but he courteously invited me to be his guest at least until the next morning. Being tired to death, I gladly accepted the invitation, and stepped with my host into a large room on the ground floor.

"Do you know anything particular about my friend's accident, reverend sir?" I asked, as we were seated at a large table.

"In the terrible confusion that has reigned here for several days," the Parson answered, "it was impossible to obtain any certain information; for as yet we know nothing more about the dreadful battle of the third of July than a few details we learned from those slightly wounded. The regiment of your friend took part in the battle of Jičín, where it was severed. One division retreated to

Smiřice; the other, the stronger of the two, turned southward, and was then joined to the first army corps. On the third of July this division was among the reserves of the first army corps, and it appears to have been sent to the aid of those fighting near Probluz about four o'clock in the afternoon; and in this skirmish your friend was wounded. Judging from the wound itself, he must have been struck with a sabre just as he was stooping down for something; for the upper part of the skull is almost wholly split off. His wound is a deadly one, and all the surgeons who have inspected the wound are wondering not a little that he is still alive."

Hardly had he said this when the door opened. In came one of the men who attended the wounded, and whispered something to the Parson. The sad look of the priest caused me involuntarily to ask:

"Is he dead?"

"Dead," the Parson sadly repeated.

Once more we went into the drawing-room. My friend lay on his bed, uncovered. His youthful face, once so handsome, wore an expression unutterably painful.

"He must be buried this morning," the Parson remarked. I stepped close to the bed and touched my friend's hand. It was ice-cold. Tears filled my eyes. I turned

away, and, being unable to speak, went downstairs with the Parson. The first dawn of day was already pouring in through the windows. Leaving me in the first room, the Parson went to his bedroom. I lay down, dressed, upon a sofa, but could not fall asleep. About two hours later the yard was full of men. I arose, and walking about the room awaited the funeral in feverish excitement.

After nine o'clock all soldiers that died of their wounds during the night were buried. I escorted my friend on his last journey, I saw how he was let down into the grave, and with a broken heart I returned to Prague.

* * *

Now, after many years have passed, after I have seen so many times how mercilessly Death often rages among the living, how suddenly his icy breath overtakes even vigorous persons, — now I can bear even my friend's death more easily, in accordance with his wishes and views, as a welcome deliverance from the griefs and woes with which so-called Providence has so liberally overwhelmed mortals. At that time, however, I was young — that is, at an age when the death of a beloved friend deeply affects even a person less sensitive than I was, and there-

fore it is no wonder that this death was a crushing blow.

At first it seemed to me impossible that he should be really dead. But when, at times, I recalled all the details, when I reminded myself of the truth that the grave never gives up its prey, when I reflected that I could never, never see my friend any more, that for me and for everybody else he was forever lost, — I felt an inexpressible bitterness. And yet, whenever I thought of him, the words of his last letter always came to my mind: "Should I get killed, don't mourn! Call our old friends together, and then think of me with cups of wine in your hands."

I held it to be my duty to fulfil even this last wish of his; but at first I was prevented by grief, and later by studies, which I renewed with double zest. Yet all mental toil could not obliterate his memory, or drive away the thought that I was violating our friendship in not fulfilling his request.

Nearly four months had passed since his death, and the autumn had already come, when I determined to perform his last wish. Toward the end of October I invited all our old comrades and some acquaintances to come in the evening to a small inn in the Maltá Strana, renowned for its wine, where

in the past we had spent many an hour in merriment. But when I went there, I found that out of the twelve invited friends there had come — not a single one.

I sat sadly down, ordered a bottle of Bohemian wine, and betook myself to thinking. The tavern was empty, and so I could think uninterruptedly; and I thought of friendship, faithfulness, life, death, and God knows of what else. My thoughts and recollections were gloomy, bitter, painful. No wonder that one of the most vivid was the memory of my friend. His image still was vivid enough in my mind, though not as vivid as when I left Nechanice four months ago. It was losing its vividness, and the thought that sometime it would vanish altogether, and that after some years I should probably be unable to recall a single feature of his face, caused my soul great bitterness.

"Never!" — for the first time in my life did I understand the deep and fearful meaning of that simple word that is so often spoken every day. Never to see a beloved face; never to touch a dear hand — never — never!

The longer I meditated upon the meaning of that fatal little word, the more hopeless were the thoughts which swarmed in my head. But what gave birth to those dark thoughts was not so much the circumstances

under which they originated as my own mental fatigue. For I had lately studied so earnestly that I had hardly left my room for two weeks. He who knows from experience how a long mental strain exhausts a man will understand my condition. For several months I had studied chiefly optics and mathematics as applied to astronomy; but my studies did not progress as I wished, and in my soul there was that chaos which precludes a clear comprehension of the more important principles of science.

No wonder that I oftener sought a glass than usual; no wonder that I left the tavern sooner than I had intended, and that, when I returned to my room, I felt more tired than when I left. I sat upon a chair near my writing-desk, took a book out of the case at random, opened it, and began reading. I had hardly glanced over half a page when I pushed the book aside, and resting my head on both my hands went on thinking, and by and by began to slumber.

All of a sudden I heard the hollow rattling of a carriage. I lifted my head and listened. A dead stillness was around me; only now and then I heard the moan of the autumnal wind. The rattling sound came nearer and nearer, until the carriage stopped, it seemed, in front of the house where I dwelt. I

wanted to rise and look from the window, but being tired I overcame my curiosity and remained seated. I heard how some one rang the janitor's bell, and how the door opened and was closed.

No one lived in the house who would come home in a carriage; but the sound of voices, especially the janitor's voice, showed that the comer was one who had a right to enter. In a few moments drowsiness overcame me again. I cannot say how long I dozed, but I was awakened by a gentle tapping at the chamber door. Again I lifted up my head and listened. A lamp was burning on the table before me, only faintly illuminating my study with its yellowish light; all around was as still as the grave.

But what is that? Again I heard a distinct knocking at the door.

"Come in!" I said with a feeble voice.

The door opened quietly, and in the dusk I saw the tall figure of a man. I was about ten steps from him, and could not distinguish his features nor his dress.

"Who are you, and what do you wish so late?" I addressed the figure that stood motionless at the door. Without answering, the man opened wide the door, and the yellowish glitter of the lamp fell upon his face. I cried out in amazement; I tried to

jump up, but my legs were too heavy. There he stood at the door. It was — my friend!

For a few moments the silence was unbroken. Not uttering a word, he stood motionless, while I could not turn my eyes away from him. His face was deadly pale; but the clear blue eyes were sparkling with life, and a light, kindly smile played about his lips.

"Good evening," he said, after a while, and stepped forward a little. Hearing the clatter of a sabre, I noticed that he was dressed as a military officer.

"Why! are you not dead?" I asked, astonished.

"How can I be dead, and stand before you?" he replied, with his clear, agreeable voice.

"Am I asleep or awake?" I uttered, forcedly. "Did I not see you dying and dead — at Nechanice — with your skull cut in two?"

"Possibly you saw me, and possibly you saw some one else," was the answer of my unexpected guest; "but now you see me standing before you safe and alive — there can be no doubt. Here is my hand!"

I hesitated a moment, but finally shook hands with him, and I found that his hand was not cold, but as warm as formerly.

"You complied with my last request," my friend continued, "and I have kept my word; I have come to see you."

"But how is all this possible?" I inquired diffidently.

"It is all very simple," he answered; "but please allow me to sit down, and I shall briefly tell you everything, for I have no time to lose."

Silently I drew a chair nearer, and my friend sat down by me.

"Well?" I asked.

"Doubtless you saw only an officer who looked like me when you were at Nechanice. It was First Lieutenant Jiruš, who was seriously wounded in the battle of Probluz and died at Nechanice, as I learned afterward. The mistake was possible only because he resembled me, that's all."

"But how was it possible that my letter to you was found on him?"

"That is very simple, too. A few hours before the battle a greater part of our regiment was lying in reserve in a small grove. The troops were ready for battle; the officers were walking from one company to another, or stood in groups talking. You must not think that the light military heart is particularly grave before battle. Jokes are perpetrated even in the hottest fight — the more so

while the soldiers are impatiently waiting for a signal to march or to fire. I well remember that I was not in good humor that day, and to escape *ennui* I took out your letter and read it a second time. By chance First Lieutenant Jiruš came unnoticed behind me, and thinking that I was reading a love-letter he snatched it in jest from my hands, intending to read it aloud to my colleagues; but at the same moment we were ordered to march out. Jiruš put the letter into his pocket and hastened to his company; while I drew my sabre and stepped into line. A moment later a fierce shooting followed, and we thought of nothing but the enemy. You know the end of the fight: I was captured, and have just returned from Königsberg, where I have been vexed with *ennui*."

"But why, at least, did you not write me a card?" I asked, when he finished.

"A mere whim," he answered quietly. "And besides, I followed your example, and wearied myself with mathematical and astronomical studies."

"But what brings you here so late? When did you come?" I asked urgently, being almost fully convinced that he was alive and well.

"I arrived this evening; but even yesterday our friends knew that I was coming, so

they failed to go to the tavern where you invited them. You are the only one whom I did not inform, in order to surprise you the more. I come now to invite you to a banquet which my father gives in the castle of Prince Kinský, in celebration of my safe return. At the same time I must tell you that I shall give there the great performance in *escamotage* which, as you know, I have been preparing for years. My automatons and other apparatus are all in the best order, and I hope to interest all the guests."

Everything I had just heard and seen showed that my friend, supposed to be dead, had really come to see me, and that his passion for *escamotage* was unabated.

"But why is the banquet given this very day? Can it not be postponed?" I asked, after a while.

"What an idea!" said he. "My father gives the entertainment with the consent of Prince Kinský, who has invited many guests. Look, the castle is all illuminated!"

Then he stepped to the window, from which a part of Kinský's villa could be seen, and rolled up the curtain. All the windows of the palace were, indeed, lighted.

"The banquet has already begun, about an hour ago," he went on; "my performance will begin later, and for this reason I came to

inform you. Come, if you like. But excuse me; you will have to come by foot alone. I must leave in haste and without you, purely for an *escamoteur's* reasons, of course. Will you come, then?"

"I will," I said, rising.

He arose quickly, shook hands, and left. I heard his steps, heard the door open and close, and then a carriage rattling along the street. I listened, listened until the sound died away.

All I had just witnessed was so strange, in spite of all explanation, that for a time I remained sitting motionless, unable to collect myself. Distrust soon arose in me. Being alone, and seeing nothing changed about me, I was ready to believe it all a dream; but the Prince Kinský's illuminated palace, which I saw from my window, confirmed the opinion that I was really awake, and that I was able, nay, obliged, to perform my friend's request.

I shall never forget the sensation I felt after his departure. I felt as happy as a man who was unexpectedly freed from some dreadful vision that had haunted him a long time. I felt an unusual briskness and strength. Without any long deliberation I put on an overcoat, took my hat, and left the room. I went slowly downstairs, knocked at the janitor's

window, had the door opened, and walked into the street.

It was a clear autumn night. The pensive moon, lightly veiled in thin mist, hovered above Petřín, and in its silvery beams the moist pavement glittered like the surface of a lake curled by a gentle breeze. Now and then I felt the breath of a cold north wind. As the wind was blowing directly against my face, I hastened my pace, and in about a quarter of an hour I stood before the grated entrance of the Kinský park. The main gate and the side doors were wide open; and an old porter, an old acquaintance of mine, dressed in a fur coat, as though it were mid-winter, was impatiently walking up and down.

"Are there many guests to-night?" I asked the porter.

"Yes, sir," he murmured in answer.

"Is it long since the celebration began?"

"Possibly; but I am not sure. About half an hour ago Frederic, the young gentleman, rode out and has just returned."

"What do they celebrate?"

"I do not know; but the young gentleman whom they thought dead came back, and undoubtedly it is in his honor."

"Really?" I whispered unwillingly; and now was I first fully convinced that all I had

shortly before witnessed in my study was no delusion, but reality.

"I may go upstairs, may I?" I asked formally, knowing beforehand that the old porter would let me in, even if he had an express order not to admit any uninvited guest.

"Why, you are in the first place on my list of guests," he answered.

"Good-by, then," I said, and walked up the broad gravel drive.

The cold of the autumnal nights had left evident traces of its implacable destructive power in the park. The leaves of trees and bushes were yellow, and had mostly fallen. Here and there a tree stretched out perfectly bare branches. The dead silence of the night was broken only now and then by a blast of the cold north wind. I hurried on and soon saw the palace, about five hundred paces before me.

All the windows were lighted; in front of the villa I saw dark figures coming and going, and farther on stood a long row of carriages. A little later I heard low sounds of music, evidently coming from the villa. What kind of music it was I could not exactly tell; but it seemed to be rather melancholy, sad as a funeral march.

In a few moments, however, the music became silent, and I heard nothing but the

scraping of the gravel under my feet. I hastened still more. The nearer I came to the palace the fewer dark personages I saw before it, and when I finally stopped directly in front of the villa all was as still and quiet as if the palace had been uninhabited. At some other time this would have seemed strange to me; but now, remembering that I was coming to a special celebration, given in honor of an *escamoteur* who, after many years of study, desired to surprise his guests with an extraordinary performance, I did not wonder even when on entering the foyer I found myself in utter darkness. I only looked back on hearing the clapping of a large door; but I judged that all this was done only to strengthen the effect.

I stopped and waited to see what would happen next; but deep silence and darkness reigned all around. After some time, after my eyes, coming suddenly from moonlight into darkness, had become adapted to the dark, I noticed a streak of light a few paces before me. Coming nearer, I found that it was due to the moonlight penetrating through the half-open door from an adjoining room.

I opened the door wide and entered. The room was vacant and without any furniture; and though I had not been in the castle for a

long time I recollected that that room used to serve as an antechamber to the corridor leading to the main hall, where all greater banquets were usually held. I also remembered that this was the usual way to the main hall whenever a person did not wish to enter through the chief entrance. Knowing which way to go, I stepped to the window, through which the moonlight was pouring in, and near which there was a secret tapestried door leading to the corridor. Without any difficulty I found a small knob in the wall, — a secret spring, — and pressing the knob I opened the door, as I had often done in the past.

I saw before me a long vaulted corridor devoid of all ornaments. The moon shone faintly in through some windows, and there was light enough to enable one to see that the corridor was empty. The moonlight was so sharply reflected from the snowy walls and partly from the floor, paved with smooth, alternately white and black diamond-shaped stones, that I could tell every cloud that passed over the moon.

I entered the corridor; but to my astonishment a peculiar cold blew on me, as though it were open at the other end. I went on through it until I came to a point where it joined another corridor at a right angle.

This second corridor was empty, too. I went through that, and coming to a third corridor I thought I came to the entrance to the main hall. But in place of the door through which I had in past years so often entered the hall unnoticed, I found merely a bare wall. I went on, therefore, to the corner; but here I discovered a fourth corridor, forming a right angle with the third.

Doubtless during the few years since I had visited the palace many changes had taken place. The location of the corridors must have been altered, and the entrance to the hall destroyed or removed. I went through the fourth corridor, but found no door, no exit. At the same time I discovered that the corridors through which I had gone formed a rectangular parallelogram. Thus, from the fourth corridor I passed into the first. Judging by the light, I thought I was in the corridor which I entered from the antechamber; but I could not find the door again through which I came, and which had been mysteriously shut behind me. For several minutes I searched for a door in the walls, but in vain. I wondered how all this was possible, and finally I became convinced that I was in a series of corridors from which there could be no escape until my friend should think it best to utter his magical "*Efetta!*"

I must confess that I was surprised by this introduction into these arts. To entice a man in the night from his home, under a pretext that he is to come to a banquet, to lead him into a palace, let him enter through an open gate, and then decoy him into a labyrinth of corridors, — this was as difficult an experiment as it was original.

"Well, let us wait till the adroit magician thinks fit to release us from the prison," was my resolution; and I quietly walked up and down the four corridors until I found myself again at the point whence I had started. At times I would stop and listen; but I heard nothing but the wind, which finally became silent, and a mysterious stillness, interrupted only by the hollow echo of my steps, overspread the corridors.

At first I was perfectly quiet; but after about half an hour had passed I began to be a little impatient. Several times I shouted my friend's name; but in answer I merely heard an echo of my own voice.

Walking through the corridors at a constantly growing pace, I warmed myself a little; I felt the cold the more acutely when I slackened my pace or stopped. I had to walk faster and faster. In the true sense of the word I ran through all the corridors, stopping at that point where I supposed the

door was by which I had entered. For a while I searched for the door; but the cold drove me on. My anxiety increased. It seemed to me that I had been wandering through the corridors fully three hours. Every minute was almost an hour to me. I stamped, clapped, and shouted; but the stillness was unbroken. And whenever I stopped, the mysterious cold forced me on. Again I ran; I felt that my blood boiled — that the sweat was running down my face; but a mysterious power urged me on. I saw nothing before me but a dark corridor, seemingly growing narrower, and I began to doubt whether all this were real. But immediately I remembered that I saw the castle illuminated, that I spoke to the porter, and heard the music; in a word, that all this must be a reality, . . . and yet I could not comprehend why I heard only the hollow echo of my own steps and words, as though I were in an uninhabited palace. "Thus," I thought, "thus fares a man who, staggering from one error into another, is in vain looking for firm ground; thus arises the chaos of divergent notions and ideas which usually precedes that awful state of mind known as — insanity."

This thought suddenly arose in my mind, and instantly made my blood rise to my

head. An involuntary cry escaped me; I tottered; my heavy legs ceased moving; I fell to the floor. Darkness spread over my soul.

But lo! what is that?

Does it not seem to me as though I were listening to gentle sounds of music, and as though a clear stream of light had flitted before me? I rub my eyes and try to get up. In a few moments I succeed.

I see that I am standing in an arched corridor; there is a door, only half shut, in front of me, and a stream of light comes in through the opening. I really hear music. I advance staggering toward the door. Through the opening I look into a brightly illuminated hall. But my eyes are so dim that I cannot distinguish anything in the hall. But my consciousness is returning. I try to advance, but I stagger again, and have to lean against the wall. In that position I remain about five minutes; then I open the door a little more and glance into the hall.

I then first became fully satisfied that I was standing at the secret door so well known to me, and that the music I heard was coming from the hall, where I saw a considerable number of guests. But how it could have happened that I had wandered for about

three hours, as it seemed to me, in the simplest labyrinth of four corridors forming a regular parallelogram, that I had been unable to find the door which was so near, — this I could not explain. At that time, however, I did not trouble myself about solving the enigma; my unusual excitement had not yet ceased, and I was curious, too, to learn who was in the hall and what would happen next. Putting off my overcoat and throwing aside my hat, I slipped through the door and remained standing on the sill, leaning against the doorposts.

The large, high hall was splendidly decorated, and illuminated with numberless lights, so that a person could find a grain of poppy-seed on the floor. The first look convinced me that there was a large and rare company assembled, but a company of men only.

There may have been about two hundred persons in the hall. They sat at tables which were so arranged in a half-circle that a person could easily walk around each table, and from each one could see a black curtain, reaching from the ceiling to the floor, and dividing off a part of the hall. A number of servants were waiting on the guests; others were busy bringing the most varied meats and drinks on silver plates. I was unable to discover where the band of music

was placed, but I heard distinctly the soft sounds of a melancholy piece. The band was undoubtedly either in a recess or in some adjoining room. The hall was full of a gentle noise; I heard the murmur of the guests and the half-stifled calls of the lackeys; but to me all this was one unintelligible rustle, as when a distant waterfall disturbs the silence of the night.

No one seemed to notice me at first, and I was at full liberty to observe the guests. Though I did not know, except by name, a great many of the prominent citizens of Prague, yet I soon found out that the company assembled was a choice one.

Recollecting that the Kinskýs were coöperating with the father of my friend, I was not surprised to see a number of noblemen at one or two of the tables. I recognized one of the Princes Lobkovic, two Waldštýns, a Count of Thurn and Taxis, two Kaunices, the old Count Hanuš, of Kolovrat, the Rohans, etc., — noblemen nearly all of whom had frequently been guests of the Kinskýs in the past. All these, and others whose names I did not know, were seated at one end of the half-circle of tables.

Neither was I surprised to find, at the opposite end of the half-circle, Prince Schwarzenberg, the Archbishop of Prague, two can-

ons, the Abbot of Strahov, the generals of the Knights of the Cross and of the Maltese order, the Provost of Vyšehrad, and other ecclesiastical dignitaries; at the next table I saw the parsons of St. Nicholas and of Smíchov, and several other divines whom I did not know.

Next to the tables of the noblemen there were two or three tables where civil and military officers, Bohemian and German deputies, and governmental and city officials of various sorts were sitting. Then followed other guests, whom I classed as *savants* and university professors; for I had recognized some of my former teachers among them.

In the Bohemian literary world I knew — at that time — only Pfleger, who was related to my friend, and our beloved poet, Neruda, who had been my teacher and my friend's. Both of them, and many others, I found among the guests, engaged in lively discourse.

Our friends who failed to come to the inn when I invited them were also present, and sat at a table near by that of the men of letters.

I might perhaps have recognized many other prominent personages had I not been interrupted in my observations: one of the lackeys, passing by, stopped before me. I recognized an old acquaintance of my early

years, when I used to be almost an every-day guest in the castle or in the park.

"Come at last!" he said, in a low voice; and his gray, deep-set little eyes glittered with a peculiar flame. "I must instantly announce that you have arrived. Please step down into the hall, and take a seat at the middle table." He pointed to the table where our friends were seated.

"Why at that table, exactly?" I asked.

"Because it has been so ordered," answered the poor fellow, who had been doing nothing else during all his life but obeying orders.

"But why?"

"I do not know, and I need not know. But it cannot be otherwise. Look how the guests are seated: There noblemen sit in a group; opposite them are the divines; here are the officials, and so forth. 'Each to his fellows,' was our motto. Thus there are seated in separate groups the physicians, lawyers, philosophers, architects, sculptors, actors, opera singers, painters, musicians, authors, and so on; even the people that have no calling are seated together."

"But why all this? No such ceremonies have ever been observed here," I remarked.

"They *were* not, that is true; this time,

however, it has been so ordered," the lackey retorted. "Please," he added, in the pleading tone in which only a nobleman's servant knows how to beg without expressing his request in words. While speaking, he pointed again to the table where my friends were sitting.

"Well, I shall obey the order and take my seat accordingly, to spare you trouble," I said, softened, and walked to the table assigned me, while the lackey went through the hall and quickly disappeared through the main entrance.

The guests paid little or no attention to me. Some turned their heads; others glanced at me; but not having seen me coming in by the main door, they probably thought that I had left the table before and was now returning. Some shook hands with me; others greeted me with a kind smile or a bow of the head.

But before I sat down the gentle music had changed into a deafening *fanfare*. A few moments later the flourish ceased, a greater part of the lights were turned out, and as the black curtain was being drawn we heard a sonorous voice saying:

"The performance begins!"

The eyes of all present were fixed upon the curtain. When the curtain was fully drawn

I beheld a platform covered with a black cloth. On the platform stood a low catafalque, supporting a metallic coffin. Around the coffin there was a multitude of beautiful exotic flowers. Large candles were burning on both sides of the coffin. At its head there lay a large laurel-wreath; farther down was an officer's hat and sabre; and at the foot, in front, was this simple epitaph:

FREDERIC WÜNSCHER,

IMP. ROYAL FIRST LIEUTENANT.

BORN ON THE 7TH OF JULY, 1841.

DIED ON THE 7TH OF JULY, 1866.

There was a general surprise.

A stillness so great that the least whisper could have been easily heard spread over the hall. After a few moments the silence was broken by sad, touching voices singing the well-known "Salve Regina," seemingly coming from afar, perhaps from some of the adjoining rooms.

No one spoke a word as long as the singing lasted. Even after the singing ceased and a dead stillness filled the hall again, no one moved or stirred. Doubtless for the moment there was no one in the hall except myself who was conscious that all this was

nothing more than an original opening of an *escamoteur's* performance.

The Archbishop rose first of all; evidently he was the most impatient. But at the same moment the lid of the coffin flew up with a din, and remained hanging in the air between the floor and the ceiling, just as they say the lid is hovering above Mohammed's coffin.

In the uncovered coffin I saw a dead body in the uniform of a military officer. Standing too far off, however, I could not distinctly see the features of the face.

The hall was still buried in silence.

First, after several minutes, one of the guests arose at the table where the physicians and men of science were seated. I at once recognized the expressive face of Dr. Sperlich, of Smíchov.

"Let us examine the body," he said, and walked briskly to the catafalque. His colleagues followed. Then the engineers and the architects arose, then others; the philosophers and the divines were the last. In a few moments the catafalque was surrounded by nearly all the guests. Only a few of the physicians stood close to the coffin — all the others looked on from a safe distance; hence it was not difficult for me to get near. Standing at the head of the corpse, I fastened my eyes upon the pale, set face.

It was the same face which I had seen at Nechanice after the battle of Königgrätz. Its likeness to the face of my friend was so striking that after looking awhile at the cold features I could not help believing that I saw his dead body.

Dr. Sperlich passed his hand over the forehead of the corpse, felt the pulse, unbuttoned the white jacket and the shirt, and declared that it really was an embalmed corpse that was lying in the coffin. Some of those standing nearest followed his example to test the truth of his words, and no one doubted it. I too put my hand upon the forehead; it was ice-cold. Bowing nearer to the face, I did not notice the least breath. The hand, too, was cold, and the half-uncovered bosom showed unmistakable signs of death.

In order to prove beyond any doubt that the body in the coffin was lifeless, Dr. Sperlich drew out a pocket-knife and thrust it into the chest of the corpse. The body was moved by the thrust, but otherwise remained unchanged. The guests could not comprehend this in any way. There was an exchange of opinion among some; others returned to their places. In five or six minutes there were not more than twenty persons remaining by the coffin. About to go back to my place, I looked once more at the corpse's face.

The rosy leaflet of an exotic plant lay on the rigid lips, and just as I fixed my eyes upon the face the leaflet shivered as though a feeble breath had touched it. I looked at the face more fixedly, and noticed that the eyebrows seemed to be trembling, and again the breast looked as though it had moved. At once I grasped the corpse's hand to see if my eyes were not deceived. The hand was no longer ice-cold, but warm; and it seemed to me as though its warmth were increasing. I was about to call Dr. Sperlich's attention to the sudden change, but before I could do so the eyes of the corpse slowly opened and closed again. A slight cry escaped my lips. Some of those standing nearest came still nearer; but in a moment all stepped back in amazement. The corpse moved, or rather shook convulsively, as though an electrical current had suddenly gone through it; and I distinctly perceived the symptoms of returning animal life.

About three minutes later the head moved, then both hands, and in a few moments the whole body was in motion. The corpse sat up with difficulty and remained awhile in that position; then it fell back into the coffin, then rose and sat up again. The surprise of those present grew into awe.

Whatever may have been the effect of the unexpected occurrence upon this or that one of the guests, it was certain that there was no one who was not amazed in the highest degree. Evidently no one thought that the performance of an *escamoteur* would be opened in such an original way. All eagerly wondered what would come next.

After the corpse sat up in the coffin, a general silence prevailed. Not a finger stirred; all eyes were bent upon the wonderful automaton which the experts had just pronounced to be an embalmed corpse.

And now the corpse gave further signs of life! True, it sat motionless for some time, but its eyes glistened. Then it moved its head, and looked around as though it were seeking some one; then it nodded as if satisfied; a light smile passed over its face; the mouth opened and spoke: "*De mortuis nil nisi bene!*"

How strange! All that had been going on before the eyes of the guests until now failed to elicit one single word of admiration or surprise. The sound of the human voice drew out the first response, and stormy applause rang through the hall, accompanied by shouts of "Bravo!" "Well done!"

At the same time all the lights went out suddenly; utter darkness filled the hall. A

few moments later, however, the lights were lighted again; but instead of the catafalque, the coffin, and the animated corpse, there appeared before our eyes a simple writing-desk and a chair, and behind the desk there stood my friend in an elegant black dress.

Again a long roar of applause filled the hall, and everybody shouted, "Very good!" or "Bravo!"

After the stormy manifestations of approval had subsided, my friend addressed the guests:

"You will excuse, gentlemen, this unusual way of opening my performance; but as I have begun, so shall I finish it; only between the acts permit me to say a few words which may interest some of you. You see a man before you whose brain is not his own, but — another's."

Then with his right hand my friend grasped the top of his head, and, as easily as if he were taking off his cap, he took off the upper part of his skull, and holding it awhile in his hand advanced a few steps to the foreground.

"Nearly all that I am going to tell you now will seem improbable," he said, "but any of the *savants* present may convince himself of its truth. Allow me!"

Stepping down into the half-circle of guests, he seated himself on a chair and continued:

"Let some one who knows anatomy and physiology examine my brain!"

At these words, some of the guests at the professors' table arose, surrounded my friend, and began to examine. One of them undertook an oral explanation:

"Truly, so it is! We really see the skull pared off and the surface of the brain. The surface shows quite normal convolutions. Under a microscope some of them might, perhaps, show some differences in size and form, but now we can only see a common surface. We see plainly also the well-known gray matter, composed of nerve-cells and deposited all along the surface in small convolutions; and, for the benefit of laymen, I add that modern physiologists designate this gray matter as the seat of consciousness, thought, talent, and recollection. More I do not pretend to say."

"It will be my turn now," my friend remarked, as he put the skull on his head and slowly walked back to his desk.

"The brain which one of my esteemed guests has just examined," said my friend, opening his preliminary explanations, "is not, as I have mentioned, my own, but another's. I borrowed it for the same purpose for which millions of others have for ages been borrowing the most precious results of

the activity of other people's brains — their ideas; for it is easier to think with another's brain, to boast of another man's ideas, and to benefit thus oneself and others, than to hammer out an idea in one's own brain. I had long been thinking which brain would be the most suitable, and finally I decided to try the brain of a man whom the whole civilized world classes among its most acute thinkers. I knew that the brain of that man was preserved in the British Museum; by stratagem I succeeded in securing this invaluable treasure; and when, after the battle of Königgrätz, the longed-for opportunity came, and my own skull was cut off by a sabre, I replaced my brain with that of Newton."

"That is an impossibility!" was shouted at the table of the physicians, anatomists, and physiologists.

"An absurdity!" said the lawyers.

"Nonsense!" concluded the philosophers.

"A godless blasphemy!" sounded indignantly from the theologians' table.

This many-sided expression of displeasure failed to embarrass my friend. He must have expected it; and he went on quietly:

"I beg your pardon, my esteemed friends. Every one judges after his own fashion; every one perceives, qualifies, and names various conceptions and objects in the way

he has learned and acquired, and as he likes. Different opinions and different names do not change the things themselves in the least; they remain such as they are in fact."

This sophistical turn apparently allayed the resentment of most of the guests, but convinced no one. Accordingly it was not surprising to hear new shouts from among the crowd:

"A proof! We want a conclusive proof."

"A conclusive proof" — my friend resumed his talk — "is something that I am unable to offer at this moment, just as none of us can furnish unanswerable proofs of the most ingenious hypothesis of all ages — Newton's law of universal gravitation. I must, therefore, ask my honored guests to accept my views, as those often do who, disregarding proof, rely always on their own conviction, so-called.

"Let us suppose, my honored guests, that my brain has really been supplanted by the brain of Newton.

"I suppose," my friend continued, "that every one of us will concede that the human brain has always been made of the same material, that ages ago it was composed of the same parts, that its actions were governed by the same laws, that its surface was composed of the same convolutions, and that

ages ago, even, there was deposited in these convolutions that wonderful gray matter, surrounded with white matter and composed of nerve-cells, which modern physiologists designate as the seat of thought, reason, judgment, and talent. The chief organ of thinking and of talent is, therefore, the same. But what are its functions? Why do they differ so substantially from the working of that same organ in the past? Why is it that there do not arise in the brains of our age thoughts like those that originated in the brains of Homer, Sophocles, Æschylus, Euripides, Aristophanes, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Dante, Milton, Petrarch, Tasso, Calderon, Molière, Voltaire, Rousseau, and others? Where are the brains which gave birth to the wonderful works which have been left to us by Michael Angelo, Rafael Sanzio, Rubens, Titian, Murillo, Leonardo da Vinci, Van Dyke, Rembrandt, Hogarth, Salvator Rosa, Ostade, Ruysdael, or even by our own Škreta and Brandl?[1] Where are the brains to be found to-day which marked the long array of ingenious sculptors beginning with Phidias, Skopas, and Praxiteles? Where are the brains which constructed plans of magnificent domes, palaces, pantheons? Where are the brains of Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn?

[1] Karel Škreta and Petr Brandl, two noted Bohemian artists.

Where are the brains of the Garricks, Keans, Talmas, Rachels? And if we live in the age of progress, what shows that progress?

"The object of my discourse will be plainly seen after my final experiment.

"The mysterious gray matter of the human brain, which our physiologists look upon as the source of thought and the home of mental abilities, still remains the same in substance. Ideas spring from it, and human talents are hidden in it. For this reason, notwithstanding all the difference of ideas and faculties, the unknown laws which govern this mysterious process remain forever the same; in a word, logic is one and eternal. Who knows whether the brain of some farmer, mechanic, servant, or slave, long forgotten, if shaped under the same circumstances, laboring in the same direction, under like conditions, as the brain of Newton, — who knows whether that brain would not have reached the same conclusions, or perhaps grander results, and much sooner, than the brain of Newton?"

"No one will dispute a sentence so conditioned," came from an unknown voice at the authors' table.

"Why, then, that absurd worship of the so-called geniuses, when it is known that the same conditions under which this or that cel-

ebrated deed or work was done exist with thousands of others who do not even attempt performance?"

"Bravo!" "Bravo!" the noblemen applauded.

"But why, too, that still more absurd worship of men without any talent who have become famous only through the genius of others, hired and paid?"

There was heard a suppressed murmur of disapproval from the table of the noblemen and officials; but my friend went on:

"Why worship one's own genius, one's own deeds, one's own age? Why those eternal eulogies on the age of enlightenment and progress, when we are still so far from the true universal enlightenment, when we know that all that the human mind has achieved in the course of ages may be abused? Is not a modern workingman, attending a machine, still the same slave as ever? Is his life any more pleasant, safer, or happier than it used to be? Do we not know that all the sciences, from mathematics (the queen) down to the last, often charlatanical pseudo-science, — do we not know that all achievements, old and new, are alike employed in the mutual killing of men? The progress of modern strategy and military tactics shows that all newly discovered

means of communication are used to convey large armies in the shortest time to places where they may engage in reciprocal slaughter. Mathematics, chemistry, optics, mechanics, and a series of other sciences furnish their latest and best productions to subserve that purpose. Ay, even history, dealing with mere facts, and pedagogy, pointing to models, have oftentimes the same object. What is the model heroism of which the historian speaks, what this modern drill, — these army orders, — but the refined means which stimulate human souls to a passionate, furious, and often useless battle?"

The military men fell in line with, "Don't insult your vocation!" and from the rear a deep voice asked:

"How is all this connected with the experiment?"

"Very simply," my friend replied. "My experiment is based on a scientific hypothesis."

"Well, why don't you take up your experiment?" the same unknown voice suggested.

"Go on with the lecture!" came from the tables to the right.

"No, no! The experiment! We want the experiment!" came from the left.

"Speak, speak!" urged the centre.

Such a noise and din arose in the hall that for a time not a word could be understood. Strange as it may seem, persons whose profession led them to frequent public speech-making — the divines, legislators, and professors — showed the greatest impatience in calling for the experiment; whereas people who seldom tried to deliver a lecture in public — such as artists, architects, soldiers, etc. — evinced an especial willingness to listen to my friend's rhapsodical discourse.

"My esteemed guests are separated into two camps," he began, after the noise had subsided a little. "As a wretched artist, desiring to please all who appreciate my art, I cannot at present satisfy either party, for I do not know which possesses the keener appreciation of my performance. There remains nothing for me but to satisfy both; therefore I ask your permission to finish my talk, and then the experiment shall immediately follow."

"Very well!" all cried on the right, on the left, and in the centre; and my friend resumed:

"The modern man's proud boast of progress is really pitiable. It seems that a moment's success, often questionable, of some ingenious head dazzles a thousand others with a false vision of an amazing progress;

and yet man's powerlessness appears daily in a more and more intensive light. Early in our youth our teachers told us that the human sight was feebler than that of the eagle or the falcon; that man's hearing, smell, touch, and other senses were duller than those of many animals. Man has known this long; hence his dreadful chase after some means to sharpen his senses. He strengthened them artificially, to be the more convinced how powerless, miserable, and wretched a being he is. He took a dissecting-knife, found and classified his organs, endeavored to find out their functions, established their importance and necessity, and became convinced that the life of the master of all creation, created 'in God's own image,' did not and does not substantially differ from the life of the most subordinate creatures. He has traced the operations of his mind; but the boundary line between good and evil he has not yet defined exactly. He has penetrated deeply into the universe, and has endeavored to ascertain the laws of the world; but he has been unable to repel the awful truth that merciless death and oblivion are awaiting him. Be born, live, and suffer; then perish, crumble into atoms, and vanish forever — such is the horrible prospective which the progress of science opens to man.

To feign ignorance, to console oneself with illusions and Utopian fiction, does not help any, and is cowardly. Yet how do we regard human life in view of this horrible truth? Do we put a just value upon it? Which of us can step forward and show that a single life he has destroyed ever revived? Still we look on at fearful mutual murders — quick by means of force, or slow by means of enervating toil and suffering."

My friend paused as though he were going to rest for a time. Not the least whisper disturbed the dead stillness. It was evident that the speaker tried to suppress his thoughts rather than give them free play; and for this very reason his discourse made a favorable impression upon those present.

After a few moments he proceeded:

"Neither I nor anybody else could return life to a dead body. All my art is based on quickness; and in everything I rely upon the relative slowness of thought. It is generally supposed that there is nothing faster than thought. This is a mistaken notion. Figures — those cold, merciless, but most sincere friends of reasoning — have proved the contrary. It has been ascertained that compared with the velocity of light and electricity the velocity of thought is astonishingly small. If I touch the skin of an adult's

leg, it takes no less than about one-third of a second before the sensation is reported by the spinal cord to the brain — the central organ of consciousness; whereas in the same time light will travel over more than fourteen thousand geographical miles; electricity, conducted by a copper wire, nearly thirty-one thousand miles. Just as slowly as the sensation of touch passes through the spine, every notion evidently passes through the brain."

Again he paused.

I must confess that up to this time I had no idea what kind of an experiment he was going to perform. His disconnected talk excited my curiosity; but mentally I had already joined those who asked for an immediate performance of the experiment. Notwithstanding this, I was unwilling to interrupt, and so kept silence.

"Along with all his other knowledge the modern man also knows how to declaim beautifully upon immortality, although he realizes too well that his final, inevitable lot is oblivion. Truly he has ever been and is endeavoring with all his power to save a picture of himself or a scene for his descendants; but art in all its phases has proved unable to do more than preserve a mere shadow of a picture — a shadow that fades

and vanishes until it disappears entirely and forever, just like the original. I have been thinking about it several years; and aided by all the discoveries of science that were accessible to me I have become able to present vividly to human eyes any scene that existed hundreds or even thousands of years ago."

"What?" "What?" was heard on all sides.

Curiosity, which my friend evidently aimed to awaken by his speech, was universal. But he went on:

"If before the invention of glass and the telescope anybody should have appeared before a learned body of men like the present, and claimed that by means of certain instruments it would sometime become possible to look out over distances of many miles, even to study heavenly bodies, his story surely would have been listened to with distrust even by the most profound thinker of the time. The same would have happened if before the invention of the steam-engine or the telegraph any one should have claimed that a journey of several months might be made in a few hours, or that one might in a moment's time hear from a person hundreds of miles away. To-day we should compassionately smile at the sceptics; yet I am sure that I shall not be believed if I make an

analogous assertion before my experiment is finished. For I have succeeded in discovering an alloy out of which a tool may be made which excels the most perfect microscopes and telescopes of to-day, although it looks just like ordinary eyeglasses. These eyeglasses enable a person clearly to distinguish things at enormous distances — a *milliard* of miles, for example."

"That is impossible!" "A fairy tale!" came from various parts of the hall.

"Considering what I have said," my friend continued, "I had to expect that I should not be believed. It is the same as if half a thousand years ago I should have asserted what has since been conclusively proved — that the earth moves around the sun. I am not at all surprised, therefore, that my esteemed guests think it impossible that I should have invented a better instrument than all our telescopes, and an incredibly simple one at that. But this is not all. For I have made another invention more improbable than the first. In truth, it is no new invention, for it has been known for ages; but its application is wholly modern. Its simplicity will surprise every one; but he who recalls the fact that the results of all human thinking may be summed up in a few words, who knows that the apparent chaos of the universe and all its millions of

natural forces are governed by one law, — he will at least understand how for a given purpose we may use the resultant of only a few forces. I have succeeded in inventing, or utilizing rather, a precious motor that has been known for ages — a motor whose velocity exceeds that of light — ay, even that of electricity."

"A Utopian idea!" some of the guests exclaimed.

"Yet I shall prove it," my friend went on, "for I have constructed a machine to test the effects of this wonderful force; the machine, ready for the most daring experiments, is here, and any one may convince himself of the truth of my words."

My friend looked up. I noticed that a large regular triangle was hanging in the air where the metallic coffin-lid had been before. One corner of the triangle pointed to the ceiling; the opposite side was in a horizontal position. The triangle was so large that two persons could comfortably stand in it. I could not tell of what material it was made. It looked as though it were made of bright, strong wire; all three sides glittered as if rays of light were reflected from a smooth wire.

Before I could examine the machine from afar, my friend simply beckoned, and the

triangle instantly slipped down upon the table. And look! First now I noticed that at its two lower corners there were hanging two glittering objects which I failed to see before. My friend put both of these upon the table and said:

"Let any one who wants to convince himself come forward and examine my apparatus."

The guests surrounded the table. I too, being exceedingly curious, hastened forward and struggled to get as near as possible to the table, so that I could view the instruments closely. I saw two pairs of eyeglasses, seemingly common glass. I looked through them, but found nothing peculiar. They seemed to be common unpolished glass. The triangular instrument was more peculiar. What from a distance seemed to be a bright thick wire was an unknown, thin, cobwebby matter, as tough as a wire and glittering; its resemblance to a thick wire was evidently an optical delusion. I, and many of the guests, examined the machine with our own eyes and our own touch.

A few minutes later my friend politely asked the guests to resume their seats. Then he proceeded:

"By way of introduction I shall give a few well-known facts concerning the velocity

of light. The speed of my machine will then be better understood. As is well known, the velocity of light is computed to be more than forty-two thousand geographical miles a second.[1] A ray of moonlight, therefore, reaches the earth in about a second and a half; sunlight arrives in about eight minutes. The light of Neptune, the farthest-known planet, needs nearly three hours to reach the earth. The nearest fixed star is four billion miles distant from us; it takes no less than three thousand two hundred years before we see its light. The distance of the fixed stars of the twelfth magnitude, according to Struve, is about five billion miles, and their light comes to us in four thousand years. And Rosse's gigantic telescope discovered stars so remote that their light reaches us only in about thirty million years. Accordingly the so-called universe must be at least thirty million years old. All this is well known, however. I merely state it to prove my assertion. If by means of polished glasses we are enabled to view bodies so distant, why should we not, by means of a far more perfect instrument, look, say, from a fixed star of the twelfth magnitude at the earth and see everything

[1 It will be noted that the astronomical "facts" as well as the mathematics of the *escamoteur* are inaccurate. — THE EDITORS.]

as distinctly as a naked eye sees even minute objects at a distance of ten or twelve inches?"

"Humbug!" burst from some one in the rear.

A light smile passed over my friend's face; so smiles a man who is sure of victory.

"Any one may doubt all I have said until I prove its truth," he went on. "But certainly every one will admit that if it were possible for us in one hour to make a journey of five billion miles from a star of the twelfth magnitude to our earth, and were our eyes strengthened as I have mentioned, we could in as short a time view scenes from the whole of mankind's history, beginning with the first man down to this very moment. This, too, every one will admit: that if the traveller desired to view a scene longer, he would have to fly with the same velocity and in the same direction as light does. Now, if we should soar up from this hall and fly with the velocity of light, we should see continually the very scene that is now before our eyes. But if we should suddenly be transferred to a point distant a little over 3,225,000,000 miles from the earth, and should then speed on with the velocity of light, the earth would appear to us as it looked twenty-four hours ago. If we should then suddenly advance ten, a hundred, or a thousand times as far, we should

see what had happened on earth ten, a hundred, or a thousand days ago, and so on. The course of our flight of course would not be direct or arbitrary: it would be a gigantic cycloid, so as to follow not only the earth's rotation around its axis, but also its course around the sun. Of all the scenes that have taken place on the face of the globe, not a single one has been lost, but images of all are being preserved in the great mirror of the universe. By means of enormous speed all these images may be traced, looked at, and examined at will. I have invented the instruments necessary for this journey, and although they may surprise everybody by their unparalleled simplicity, they have been so often successfully tested that I can to-night invite any one of the company to undertake with me an expedition into the universe."

Loud laughter, expressive partly of distrust, partly of ridicule, shook the hall. "A Utopian scheme!" "A hypothesis!" "Nonsense!" Such and similar cries came from various parts of the room. After the laughter had somewhat subsided, the same grumbler in the rear who had interrupted my friend shortly before remarked:

"Jules Verne is ahead of you, for he undertook a like journey to the moon."

A light smile again passed over my friend's face.

"You are right," he said, "but only partly so; for even Jules Verne was not the first to undertake so adventurous a journey. Edgar Allan Poe went on a like journey about a quarter of a century before him; and so did one Cyrano de Bergerac in the seventeenth century. The course of the journey is the same, but the means and the object are different. All of those who have undertaken the journey before have employed complicated apparatus, and have intended to amuse and to instruct; but I use the simplest means, and the object of my journey is" —

"We don't care what it is!" the morose guest in the rear interjected. "We want proof that such an excursion is feasible!"

"I shall furnish the proof immediately," my friend answered. "Let any one who chooses take a slip of paper and write down what event of history he wants to see; then let a delegate be chosen who shall undertake the journey with me as a manager of the machine."

My friend gave a sign with his hand, and the machine flew up several times, and again slipped noiselessly down upon the table. Its movements were so rapid that it was impossible to count them. This showed

that the machine was really something wonderful.

Thereupon there was a moderate commotion in the hall. Some of the guests, served with small slips of paper by the valets, wrote what events they wished to see; others stood in groups and talked; while my friend quietly waited at his table until all should be ready.

Like the rest, I too was fully convinced that a real performance of this fantastic excursion into the universe could not even be thought of; yet I was eager to see how my friend would proceed. Positive that the experiment could not be performed save by means of an optical delusion, I was the more curious to see how he would delude the senses of so choice a company, and whether he would succeed in deceiving me too.

After the notes had been written and put on the table, he resumed:

"You will please choose your delegate. The journey is a daring one; your delegate will stand in the triangle with me, and so we shall start up."

"Why should we choose? Let us give preference to volunteers," said the Archbishop.

"Who will volunteer?" asked my friend.

No one replied. The silence of the grave prevailed.

"Now you have the opportunity to examine the whole thing with your own senses," I said to myself; and as my friend repeated his question I rose and slowly walked to his table. A placid smile passed across his lips as he saw that I was the volunteer; and when I came to his desk he said:

"My esteemed guests, the gentleman who is willing to go on the excursion is a friend of mine. If I do not wish to be considered a charlatan who performs his experiments with the aid of his secret allies, I cannot then accept his services unless you expressly declare that you accept him as your delegate."

All fastened their searching eyes on me; it seemed to me as though each guest tried to read in my face whether I deserved to be trusted. Then some one in the centre suggested:

"We cannot do otherwise, as no one else has applied. After all, the main thing is proof; and our delegate must prove the trustworthiness of his report."

"Exactly so!" came from the tables to the right.

"We are satisfied," came from the left.

"I am willing," I said, with some hesitation, "to furnish not only a faithful account of what I shall see, but also proof — if possible."

"First of all," my friend resumed, "permit me to arrange the papers chronologically."

Then he began to arrange them rapidly. Standing close to his table, I could in many cases easily read what was written on this or that slip. There were over four hundred slips. Evidently many wrote more than one note. He showed such skill in arranging them that it took him only about five minutes.

"The first event," he then said to the guests, "which, according to the written notes, is to be seen anew, happened one hundred and nineteen days ago. If, therefore, we wish once more to see it as it is mirrored in the universe, we must first make a long journey, such as light has made in one hundred and nineteen days; then we shall for a moment regard the scene. If we wish to look longer, we must speed on with the velocity of light. In this case our first task will be to get ahead of the light. As light travels over 42,000 miles in a second, it makes 2,520,000 miles in a minute, about 3,629,000,000 miles in a day, and more than 431,851,000,000 miles in one hundred and nineteen days. With my machine we shall reach that distance in a moment, and then we shall fly on, either with the velocity of light or a little faster, in a gigantic spiral answering to the rotation of

the earth both around its axis and around the sun."

He pushed the table a little forward, and his triangle slid down to the ground without any noise. Then he put on a pair of the wonderful spectacles and entered the triangle. I followed his example.

Silence prevailed in the hall. No one stirred; evidently every one expected with eagerness what would follow. Suddenly it occurred to me that it would be impossible to break through the ceiling with the machine. I looked up toward the ceiling, and lo! I saw a large round aperture, through which I saw the sky and some groups of stars. Before I asked for an explanation of this strange change, which I had not noticed before, I heard a clear clink, as though some one had struck a silvery bell; and instantly it seemed to me that we were flying up. I say expressly that it *seemed* to me; for the scene in the hall was constantly before me.

"Do we fly, or do we not?" I inquired of my friend, who, holding the guests' notes in one hand, was managing the machine with the other.

"We do fly," was his answer. "We have only the velocity of light now, and consequently you see the same scene you saw before we started. In a few seconds I shall

so direct the machine that we shall suddenly find ourselves 431,851,000,000 miles away from the earth, whereupon we shall fly for some time with the velocity of light merely."

"All right," I said.

The scene before me grew misty. Soon I saw nothing but gray dusk passing into darkness, until there was impenetrable darkness before me.

"How is it that I do not see anything?" I inquire of my friend.

"We are as far from the earth," says my friend, "as light has travelled in one hundred and nineteen days. From a distance of more than 431,851,000,000 miles you see now the region where the event happened one hundred and nineteen days ago in the night. We fly on with the velocity of light. A light pressure on the mainspring of my machine will, however, suffice to make us fly faster, and so the whole scene will gradually develop before your eyes."

I do not answer, for in the same moment it seems to me that darkness is changing into twilight with a reddish coloring. Now flames flash through the dusk, and now the landscape emerges. I see at first only indistinct outlines of mountains, woods, rivers, cities, and villages. Soon everything looks clearer. I distinguish single fields, highways,

farms, and houses; I see entire villages ablaze, and innumerable lesser lights scattered all over the region like will-o'-the-wisps. The scene grows still more distinct. I notice how dark shadows are hurrying in a wild disorder along the highways and over the fields. Soon I perceive that the shadows are numberless living beings. I recognize horsemen and wagons and foot-soldiers. I see how in some places groups or streams of men are fleeing in disorder, how in others they form immovable crowds. All this I see in the twilight of a summer night. The landscape gradually becomes more distinct. Near the burning villages I see swarms of men. Then I recognize the groups as camps of larger and smaller divisions of soldiery, or stations where the wounded are being cared for. I see places strewn with dead horses and men, with overturned wagons and cannons, and distinguish single individuals — some digging graves, others spying about, others, again, picking up the fallen men and carrying them to the camp-fires or to the graves.

In another moment I have a perfect bird's-eye view of an evening-clad landscape with a battlefield after battle. The scene extends several miles in width and length. Nearly a hundred towns and villages are before me,

and I seem to recognize some of them. But the strange image does not remain unchanged. The longer I look at it the brighter it becomes, and I see everything clearly as though I were looking down from a tower. It is a panorama of a battle, but the scenes follow one another in reversed order — from the end of the fight to its beginning. Thus I see successively images of soldiers fleeing and pursuing, then fighting, and later preparing for battle. Now there is a daring and bloody attack of a few regiments against a firm position of the enemy; then a wild combat of single regiments of horsemen, manœuvres of the infantry, movements of the artillery. At times I see only clouds of white smoke with occasional flashes of fire. The silence of the grave is spread over the entire scene. I do not hear the thunder of cannons, the rattle of drums and the clang of trumpets, the clashing of arms and the moans of the wounded. I see a vivid and horrible, but noiseless scene. Gradually the scene of a terrible battle is changing into a milder one, until I see a peaceful region in the lustre of the golden rays of a summer sun.

How strange! It took less time to survey the whole scene than it takes to read this description. The skill with which my friend had

deluded my eyes was indeed surprising, and I fully believed that his other experiments would be equally successful.

"I think I have seen an image of the battle of Königgrätz," I said to my friend, who, standing silently by me in the triangle, was engineering the machine.

"You are right," he replied; "now you will see all the battles of the Seven Days' war in a reverse order. I shall assist you with short explanations so that you can have more time to look."

"I am satisfied," I said, waiting quietly for what would follow. I did not have to wait long. The image of the peaceful region began to darken, and in a few seconds I had utter darkness before me again. I had hardly noticed the change when darkness began to yield to twilight, twilight to daylight, and I saw another battle — the battle of Königinhof. Then followed in rapid succession the battles of Trutnov, Skalice, Náchod, Jičín, Podol, and many skirmishes and smaller engagements of the Austro-Prussian war.

"No less than 45,000 men were killed in seven days," remarked my friend.

"On!" I exclaimed; and in a moment the scene was changed. Again I saw scenes of battles from the Polish revolution and the Schleswig-Holstein war. Then followed the

terrible battle of Pueblo, and scenes from the French invasion of Mexico; further on the internecine battle of Fredericksburg and a series of battles and skirmishes of the American Civil war.

"The South American wars," my friend said, "took 519,000, the North American war 381,000, lives."

"On!" I urged; and in a moment I saw the battle of Aspremonte, the capture of Palermo, the slaughters of Solferino, Magenta, and a number of smaller battles; then scenes of dread and shame from the Hindoo revolution and equally bloody events of the Crimean war, from the last frightful attack on Sebastopol to the murderous battles of Balaklava and Inkerman.

"No less than 785,000 men was the cost of the Crimean war," my friend commented coolly.

"On, on!" I exclaimed; and instantly there was passing before my eyes scenes of street barricades following Napoleon's *coup d'état*, and scenes of dread and cruelty from the stormy years of 1849 and 1848, in a wonderful mass, and all in reversed chronological order.

The battlefields were scattered all over Europe. I saw the camp at Vilagos, the defeats of the Magyars, the bombardment

of Pesth, scenes from the Paris revolution of June, the capture of Ofen by the Magyars, the defeats of the Italians, and scenes from the Milan revolution.

I was going to speak; but my friend silenced me with a motion of his hand.

Other defeats of the Magyars followed; then the taking and the siege of Vienna, scenes from the Viennese revolution of October, from the Prague uprising of June and the bombardment of Prague by Windischgrätz, defeats of the Italians, scenes from the Paris revolution of February, and the stormy scenes from the revolutionary movements in Italy.

"And is it possible to count the victims of all these wars and battles?" my friend asked, when these images had disappeared and for a short time I beheld only quiet scenes of peace.

"Let us go on!" I urge, and soon I gaze upon scenes from the Polish revolution of 1846, and after a pause various scenes from the uprising of republicans in Paris, Toulon, and Grenoble in 1834, the capture of Warsaw by the Russian army in 1831, the Dresden tumults, and the battle of Ostrolenka.

While looking at this horrible fratricidal battle of the Slavs, I asked:

"How far are we from the earth?"

"About 46,000,000,000 miles," was his answer.

Thereupon I saw scenes from the Parisian revolution of July, the taking of Erivan by Paskievich, and the bloody battle of Missolonghi; then followed various scenes from the wars of independence on the Balkan Peninsula.

After a long pause again I saw a terrible battle.

"How far are we from the earth now?" I inquired.

"About 68,000,000,000 miles," said my friend; "you have just seen the battle of Waterloo."

While my friend was continuing his short explanations, I viewed the three days' carnage of Leipzig, the battles of Montmartre and Kulm, the remnant of the French army crossing the Berezina, the conflagration of Moscow, the battle of Borodino, the battle of Aspern, scenes from the revolutions of Peru and Mexico, and again scenes from Napoleon's wars — the slaughter of Austerlitz and the magnificent naval battle of Trafalgar.

"Is it possible to tell the number of the victims of the ambition of one despot — Napoleon?" my friend asked.

I did not answer.

We sped on. I saw the taking of Prague

by Suvarov; the fratricidal battle of Maciejovice, where Kosciusko fell down wounded with the exclamation, "*Finis Poloniæ!*" Then came the bloody scenes of the great French revolution, of the Polish insurrection, of the wars with the Turks; scenes from the American war of Independence; scenes from the Seven Years' war; a series of scenes from the fierce Northern war between the Russians and the Swedes; the battle of Narva; scenes from the Spanish war of Succession; the defeat of the Turks at Vienna by the Polish king Sobieski; and wars of the French with the Spanish and Dutch. I saw the battle of Dunbar, where Cromwell gained victory, and a series of battles down to that of Marston Moor, where ten thousand Royalists were killed. Intermixed with these battles were scenes from the Swedish invasion of Bohemia; then followed scenes of brutality from the Thirty Years' war; and finally the beheading of Bohemian patriots at Prague, and the battle of the White Mountain, of 1620, where the independence of Bohemia was crushed forever.

"How far are we from the earth now?" I inquired.

"About 325,000,000,000 miles," my friend answered; adding, "But let us speed on — the hour is passing." And in a moment we

rushed on. Again I saw a series of horrible and bloody scenes — the massacre of the Huguenots, the religious wars of France, the dire deeds of the Duke of Alva, the peasants' uprisings. Then followed scenes of slaughter from Peru, Mexico, and other American countries to which European avarice brought destruction.

"On, on!" I exclaimed impatiently.

After a short pause I saw Mathias Corvinus defeated by the Bohemians, the Tartars by the Russians, and the fanatical German crusaders conquered by the Hussites. Then followed the fratricidal battle of Lipany, where the Taborites were defeated by their Bohemian brethren in 1434, the bloody victories of the Hussites, the camp of Žižka, and the hero himself dying at Přibyslav in 1424.

Grief overcame my heart for a time, but again I saw numerous victories of the Taborites under Žižka's leadership, and, after a short pause, the horrible spectacle of Huss dying at the stake at Constance in 1415.

I could hardly catch sight of the images of all these scenes in flight before me or listen to my friend's instructive remarks; the blood began to rush to my head.

"How far are we now?" I inquired.

"About 598,000,000,000 miles," was the quiet reply. "We have flown through a

distance of about four hundred and fifty-one years. We have to travel a trifle of about 6,000,000,000,000 miles farther in order to reach the spheres of stars of the twelfth magnitude, whose light needs more than four thousand years to reach the earth."

"And is it possible to make this journey in an arbitrarily short time?" I asked, without thinking that I could not even imagine the enormous distance.

"Certainly," my friend replied.

"But tell me, please, what wonderful motor is it that moves our machine so rapidly through the universe."

"Later! Later!" he answers. "I must manage the machine. The least fault would make us lose our balance, and we should fall."

"Whither?" I ask.

"Do I know?"

"Let us rush on, then, as fast as we can!"

"If we are to finish our excursion in an hour, we must confine ourselves to a few more important views."

"Speed on, speed on!" I urge him.

Again I see a wonderful, but horrible panorama of strife. The scenes change rapidly, but each is very distinct. And lo! this time images of battles and skirmishes are intermingled with other scenes; but in all of them

there is some struggle in which the brutality of man's nature is triumphing, in which sheer force or fraud and deception are gaining the victory over natural weakness or guilelessness.

Suddenly I notice that while the scene is changing we are in darkness longer than usual.

"What's the matter?" I ask impatiently.

"I direct the machine so that you may see the final scene. We are farther than the stars of the twelfth magnitude, in spheres whose light reaches the earth in about six thousand years. This time, however, we shall change our mode of observation. When we reach the point of view I shall stop the machine, only allowing it to rotate so that the scene will develop before your eye in the natural, not in the reversed, order."

Soon a few bright rays pierce the darkness; then it changes into a gray fog, and the fog grows thinner and thinner. The dark contour of a wild, desolate land rises from the fog. Then I see a bare, stony plain, with a dense fir forest and a high mountain range in the background. A sultry, oppressive dusk, such as usually precedes a storm, overspreads the landscape; and only now and then the sun's rays pierce the dense clouds. Close to the forest, near a cave,

I see a young woman with three children. Two of them cling to their mother in fear; the third, a babe in arms, looks into its mother's eyes with a smile of happiness on its childish lips. But the pale face of the mother shows inexpressible fear and dread. Her eyes are fastened upon the dark thicket of the forest; her naked body is shivering; and while pressing the naked babe to her bosom with her left hand she stretches the right protectingly toward the other two naked children.

Suddenly a tall young man rushes out of the forest, carrying a doe on his shoulders. Another, stronger, rushes after him; a brutal fury blazes in his idiotic face. Both are naked. The first throws down the deer and courageously faces the other, who pursues him with a club in his hand. A duel ensues. The woman watches with deadly anxiety. It is a desperate fight for life. The first man falls; the stronger has broken his skull. The woman flies in despair, pressing the babe to her bosom. Both children follow her into the darkness of the forest.

I feel the blood running wildly in my veins, rushing to my brain, and vertigo seizing me. I try to speak, but fail. My friend forestalls me:

"You have just seen the first struggle of

the first of men. We are at the end of our excursion. From beginning to end you saw nothing but continual strife — a mutual killing and slaughter of the most perfect of beings. This struggle has been going on since the beginning of the world. In the course of several thousand years men tried to persuade themselves that the world was governed by the principle of love and humanity; but they find that they have been deceiving themselves. They have learned to know that a merciless and dreadful God has condemned to destruction everything that he has created weak and powerless. After thousands of years they recognize that life is but an everlasting struggle for mere existence. Men have been striving for power and glory, coveting riches, hugging their souls in the sweet embrace of sentimentality. The cold reason of Newton, fully penetrating the nothingness and perversion of men's endeavors, frightened and terrified them. They dreaded the cold, but truthful figures with which he measured the universe; the unmerciful consequences of his ice-cold, but indisputable calculations; and lo! to-day mankind stands before the throne of the Darwinian god — a horrible god of force and power. Certain people have fought this god for years; but the purpose of the fight is only to put the

dethroned gloomy god of religious fanaticism upon the throne of the god of force and power. But the fight against the Darwinian god is unequal. Should the whole world undertake the war, he cannot be dethroned. The throne of this god can be undermined only by principles of humanity."

My friend paused. His words thundered like the stern sentence of a just and austere judge. But I could not see his face; for we were in utter darkness. I kept silence. Suddenly my friend began again:

"What is that? Our machine is shaking — we have lost our balance! We sink!"

My friend's doleful voice so frightened me that my heart grew cold.

"Drop the machine!" my friend exclaimed. "One of us must sacrifice himself, else both of us will perish."

I did not answer; I could not. I only felt that my senses were failing.

"Leave, or I shall push you down!" my friend insisted again.

"Tell me the name of your motor, at least," I pleaded. At the same time I felt that the machine was overturned. We fell rapidly headlong; I dropped.

It seemed to me as though I heard my friend's wild laughter and these words:

"Good-by forever! My motor is known to all the world. It is the ever-creating — Fancy."

The voice sounded hollow; I could hardly hear the last words, for I lost consciousness.

* * *

Any one who has fallen asleep at an open window in autumn, and awakens suddenly, knows the peculiar sensation of chilliness which accompanies the awakening. A like chill thrilled me when I noticed the glimmering dawn, the faint rays pouring through the half-open window into my lone room.

I looked around in surprise, and my first thought was: "Was it a reality, a delusion, or a dream?" But my senses were so dull that they could not answer the question. I remember only that it occurred to me at once that Dr. Sperlich, who announced the death of my friend in the Kinskýs' villa, had been dead for years, and that in the castle itself there never were any such corridors as those through which I had wandered. I remember, too, that I was sitting at my desk, on which an astronomical book lay open that I must have been reading before I fell asleep.

* * *

I recall no more. I became unconscious again. I did not wake up for some time.

Then I lay on my bed, and my dear old mother was kneeling by me. I opened my eyes and looked into her sincere, wrinkled face, and a feeling of inexpressible bliss thrilled my soul.

"Oh! my dear child, what were you doing? They ran for me and told me you were unconscious. This is the third day."

"The third day?"

"The third," my mother repeated. "The physician came here several times every day, and advised rest and quiet. He said something about signs of — insanity."

A clear thought flashed through my clouded mind. I shivered.

"And he said you must stop your studies for some time." My mother rose and lightly kissed my brow.

* * *

I followed the doctor's advice and stopped studying for some time; but the haunting thoughts return now after years.

THE ELECT OF DREAMS

By Villiers de l'Isle Adam

IN November, 1887, Alexis Dufrêne, the young poet, had lived for several days in furnished rooms on the Rue de la Harpe, the fifth flight up, in an old mansion now become a lodging-house for students.

That evening he had gathered together, to celebrate his twenty-first birthday over a huge bowl of punch, two old classmates very nearly his own age — the artist, J. Bréart, and the musician, Eusebius Nédonchel.

The air of the room was cloudy with cigarettes, and further seasoned by a good clear fire. The talk, gay enough at first, deepened towards midnight. The debate now was of abstract questions of art and æsthetics. Alexis listened abstractedly, letting the others talk. Persuaded that artists who take the fold of set theories are fated only to grow old, he avoided stammering criticisms, at best perfunctory. He even disdained the *saying so* as a useless thing, fore-

gone as the dust of the streets, — taking it for granted, in brief, that at bottom every one does what he must do, and finds only whatever he has really sought.

Candles on the chimney-piece cast their light along the room. By the head of the bed was a little door, evidently long unused. Nearly all the rooms of an old mansion have such communicating doors. This one had, for a minute or two since, begun to give a little. The rusty bolt had unriveted itself, and was hanging by one screw. At the joint in the wood a faint light could be distinguished, and during lulls in the discussion hoarse sighs, short-breathed and labored, moaning out from the other side of the door, reached the young talkers.

"There!" exclaimed the painter, Bréart, lowering his voice. "What is that on the other side?"

"What if we should go and see?" murmured Nédonchel.

Both had started up; but Alexis, more promptly still, posted himself against the door, leaning back against it, his arms crossed, with an air of lyric calm which immediately impressed itself on his two friends.

"Ah! I foresee what is behind this door — I guess it," he cried. "Of a surety it is some old king from a lost country of the

East, some dispossessed king whom the hazards of exile and the mockery of the children of this century have led to this kennel. I dream that he is there, throned on a cot-bed, his eyes full of rage and grief; near him lies a money-bag full of diamonds and gold, and, pensively stretching a sceptre lost to sight in the darkness, he recklessly abandons himself to anguish. Thence those profound sighs! Ah, well! why disturb his supreme musings? I think we should respect his august and vision-haunted solitude. Leave me to sleep beside him, proud of such a neighbor. That is something to make one dream beautiful dreams."

Bréart and Nédonchel had listened open-mouthed to this harangue. Recovered from their first surprise, they looked at each other, and, reassured by the placid smiling of Alexis, Nédonchel exclaimed, "No! On my honor, I thought he was speaking seriously," and Bréart added, "I am afraid yet, myself; but come, now, let us make sure! We must go and see. Hold on! Do you hear? Surely it is some one who is very ill — some poor devil."

"Men of little faith!" replied Alexis, letting them pass, with a shrug. "Ah! you must be *making sure?* You must *see?* You must *have the truth?* Very well! Go! Only

remember this: if you cross this threshold, *you will never have any talent.*"

So saying, he returned towards the fireplace, seated himself in an easy-chair, and began poking the fire.

Eusebius Nédonchel and J. Bréart, with a shake of the head, opened the door wide. It gave on the last landing of a wretched, narrow staircase. Three steps opposite led to the half-open door of an attic whence the light and the moans had come.

Having knocked without response, they entered.

In this singularly foul garret-room a lamp, whose open oil receptacle with floating wick was almost dry, glimmered, like a poor little star, on a ledge over a sort of fireplace, devoid either of fire or ashes. A broken, rush-bottom chair, a ghost of a table with a porringer on it, and in the darkest recess of this hole under the roof, on a pallet-bed, a very old man in a beggar's rags, with wan, haggard face, through which the death's head already peered, even then giving out the death-rattle, in his hanging right hand a rag-picker's hook. It was utter misery. The last vigil for the common grave. Nothing to do. The hour of release was just about to sound.

Horrified by the sight, the two young men

shrank back, drew the door to without a word, and reëntered to Alexis with starting eyes and flaring nostrils.

"A little worn, the gilt of thy monarch!" muttered J. Bréart.

"Slightly faded in his lustre, thy prince!" echoed Nédonchel.

They recounted to him what they had seen. Having listened in silence to them, Alexis shook off the ash from his cigarette with the nail of his little finger.

"Yes," said he, with a sigh; "lo! it is indeed as I told you it would be: you will never have any talent."

"Ah! but you are absurd beyond bounds," exclaimed Bréart. "How! Two steps from a dead man, and you play the prophet? It is a question of talent, forsooth!"

"And what pertinence in it!" grumbled Nédonchel.

"Let us separate — it is late," said Alexis. "I take it upon myself to let them know, below, to-morrow morning."

They drank a last glass; then, with empty formalities of handshaking, the two youthful artists descended, whispering many a dreary joke to each other at the expense of the poet and his dethroned king.

Alexis listened for the sound of the shutting

door. Approaching the window, he heard the laughter of J. Bréart and Nédonchel rising towards him from the street more and more faintly. When their footsteps and their voices were lost in the distance, he turned back, locking himself in with a turn of the key.

"Trouble-joys! Ninnies!" muttered the poet. "Of what use to that dying man have those two droll blades been? None. Was it worth the trouble of jeering at my dream to go frighten themselves with a ghost, and come back from the Real with their nostrils aflare? That is what it is to have no talent! Scorning the Imaginary, which alone is real for any artist who knows how to command life instead of conforming to it, they preferred to set it before their senses, counting on their *seeing what it is!* In fine, they have created for me a 'duty.' Well, then!"

So saying, he filled a glass of punch as if it were a cordial, to offer it, if there was still time, to his mysterious neighbor. Then, reopening the little door, he entered the garret.

Without hesitating he approached the poor wretch, and leaning over him, with an accent of interest and kindliness,

"Well, sire," he said, "let us see. How will this do?"

At this speech the old pauper trembled as with the shiver of death; but, to the amaze-

ment of Alexis, found strength to raise himself a little on one elbow, and to regard his visitor in silence, with a cold solemnity. The poet reached him the glass, which he pushed back with his fingers.

"Ah! it is you, young man," said the old man, half dying, articulating with a very low voice, and cutting short his words. "I heard you within there. I recognize — your voice. You spoke — of a king — an exile. I too — am a dreamer. I have passed my life in dreams! You did me good, just now, — you furnished me with my last one. Dreams — it is so beautiful. But — wandering in the streets every night in a great city — one sometimes finds — what nearly realizes them. Habit only makes one disdain — that! Still — if one is sober, attentive, invests his windfalls — well — one may become — rich — with years — look!"

And with a distressing effort, cutting with the end of his hook, which seemed to gleam like a spectral thing beneath his fleshless finger-joints, he slit the bed-ticking. Bills in tight bundles, gems, rouleaux of gold, appeared.

At the sight of them, in the depth of his eyes there was something like the sudden flare of a lamp that is going out.

"Ah! how many times — at dawn — coming in here — how many times — touching,

feeling, these treasures under this forlorn mattress — have I lived marvellous minutes. Being able to incorporate my dreams, I possessed them as real"—

Death oppressed the wretched fellow. He seemed to hurry.

"Since you are worthy of it, I make you my heir. Only — see your two friends no more. Their name is lost time. Now — au revoir! — There is nearly half a million there. When you have closed my eyes, take it, my son! — and continue my dreams. For me — I — awake."

A shudder shook him; his body stiffened; he fell rigid.

To-day the poet Alexis Dufrêne, having been able to quintuple his heritage in a few months through financial operations of the most solid kind, lives in India, in a chateau-palace situated at the centre of a property of the "Thousand and One Nights." Forgetful of his two friends, he leads there the existence of a rajah.

J. Bréart and Eusebius Nédonchel are always in Paris. Both of them, like noble "æsthetes," loiter every evening in the depths of one of those taverns haunted by young future writers, to whom they proceed, by force of theory, to demonstrate "*that one must see things as they really are.*"

THE BEST LOVE

By Villiers de l'Isle Adam

AMONG the beings destined not for conventional happiness, but for real happiness, we should count a young Breton named Guilhem Kerlis. It might be said that he was born under a happy star, and that few men were more favored than he in their love. Yet how simple was his history!

It was in 1882, at dusk, on a beautiful evening in September, that Yvraine and Guilhem met each other in the country near Rennes by a hedge in the meadows. Yvraine was pretty and sixteen years old, and the only daughter of a farmer hardly above poverty. They lived in the big market-town of Boisfleury, near the city. This evening, followed by two heifers and a half-dozen of sheep, — all her flock, — she was returning home.

Guilhem, a fine lad of eighteen years, was the son of a forester in the service of Baron de Quélern; he was returning also, his game

in his game-bag. Both, looking at each other, were surprised that they had not met each other sooner, for the town was not more than two leagues from the cottage of the forester.

Around them, fields of luzerne and mown oats, still mixed with flowers; and wafted from afar the odors of the woods embalmed the evening air. They exchanged a few words. Yvraine offered Guilhem the bluets she wore in her bodice. Guilhem presented her with a fine red-legged partridge, and they parted, arranging a rendezvous that the young girl accorded unhesitatingly, for they had spoken of marriage, and Guilhem had pledged himself immediately.

They met on the morrow, not far from Boisfleury, in a path that the autumn already had strewn with golden leaves; hand in hand they exchanged childlike confidences without even thinking that they loved each other. Then every day till the end of October Guilhem saw her and grew impassioned.

His was a sober heart full of loyalty, whose sentiments were at once pure, ardent, and stable. Yvraine was joyous, engaging, and had all the chatter of a bird; perhaps was a little too gay. They engaged themselves to each other with innocent kisses and quiet

plans for housekeeping, and their embrace when they parted was long and silent.

As Guilhem had kept his secret even from his father, the old forester attributed the new preoccupied air of his son to the approach of his time for enlisting — which did, in truth, really have a part in it. The old sergeant gave him advice at supper on how to succeed in the regiment.

This primitive fellow loved, then, with fervor, with faith, — without noticing that Yvraine, being only very pretty, but without a gleam of beauty, could but prove incapable of very solid sentiments. Amorous, perhaps. Loving? Her nature forbade it. Clearly, she would scarcely have gainsaid him if he had wished to enjoy in advance conjugal privileges more serious than kisses and caresses; but, seeing this, a sort of fear of sullying his betrothed mastered the fever of his longings; the transports of passion, too forgetful of honor, felt the sacrilege in such impulses and controlled them. Yvraine, of a most frivolous temperament, regretted at the bottom of her heart that he had so strongly this quality of respect, and her inclination for him even cooled a little. She was tempted to laugh sometimes at his too sober love; love, for her, was a giddiness appealing

to a narrow range of sensations. In a word, she would have preferred to have Guilhem "more amusing;" still a husband, she said to herself, ought doubtless to be like that at first.

At the time of farewell, when Guilhem had been drawn for his military service, she felt for him rather more of friendship than love. However, they exchanged rings; she would wait for him. Five years of constancy! Was it not to credit a dream to believe in that, well weighing it? Yet the idea never occurred to Guilhem that she could fail her word.

The morning of his departure, at the moment of setting out toward the city, he said to her while he was embracing her, "I shall return a lieutenant with the cross." "Ah, my Guilhem," she replied to him, with a tone so sincere that she was herself deceived by it for a moment, "if you should get yourself killed in the war, I swear to you I shall become a nun!" He was seized with trembling. It was the unhoped-for promise! In an outburst of profound tenderness he closed her eyelids with a long kiss. It was sealed. They were husband and wife. They would write every week. The truth was, that Yvraine had had a mental glimpse of him in an officer's uniform; that had carried

her away. They separated, their eyes full of tears, each having a little photograph of the other, taken by a passing photographer for a franc.

Guilhem enlisted with the cavalry for Africa, and was detailed for service in the province of Algeria.

Their first letters were an enchanting joy for both, almost as sweet as their first rendezvous. His going away had made Guilhem for the young girl a kind of "forbidden fruit," deprived of which she longed for it the more.

Then, now there was the bond that they were really promised to each other. Nevertheless, in six months the paling of absence had modified a little Yvraine's already long constancy. She sighed, and wearied of the monotony and the solitude. Her sworn word weighed on her sometimes like a chain. She turned back from it towards friendship. Her letters — her only diversion — remained the same, having fallen into the habit of tender phrases. Those of Guilhem testified that he lived more and more in her — and hope. But four years and a half yet! Childlike, she yawned sometimes at the thought of it. Meanwhile, Guilhem's father, Kerlis, died, leaving the most modest of

purses, which Guilhem invested by letter until his return.

His presence, which had embarrassed the mother and daughter, being removed, they breathed more easily. Mother Blein, compliant and still pretty, became a little free in her manners. So, finally one day, less than ten months after Guilhem's departure, it happened as if an absurd breeze had passed over them all at once. One evening at a village festival Yvraine let herself be carried away by a young cadet on leave, who left her alone again after two days. She understood too late that, through laughing too much, she had committed the irreparable. What then? It was done! What next? Divert one's self! She felt that life was going to drift her along with it.

A month after, at Rennes, she had another lover. Soon she led the life of gross pleasure which the provinces offer to persons desirous of "amusing themselves." Nevertheless, by a feminine contrariety, she retained in the bottom of her heart a weakness for the past which she had so foolishly betrayed. The gentle and ever warm letters she received always formed such a contrast to the tone in which "the others" spoke to her! Knowing of her only what she told him, the soldier continued to respect and cherish her. It is

grief which enlightens. She appreciated him the more now! So, without calculating on what she did, she replied to him with the same loyalty as before, which she took up again in writing to him, letting him believe, as a sad jest, and in order to gain time, that she was always just as he had known her.

To know one's self truly loved, that does one good. How give it up? Why make him unhappy? Would he not know soon enough? She ought to force herself to make Guilhem's illusion last as long as possible. "He has three years yet," she said to herself, and that emboldened her. And then, she could not hinder herself from doing it. It was her one poignant happiness. "So much the better if he comes and kills me when he learns of my misconduct!" thought she. "Let us be happy now!" Which did not hinder her, launched in it as she was, from continuing, at intervals, to divert herself and give herself "a good time" with the students and officers.

All at once, no more letters. It was the fifth year, but only in the first months.

This sudden silence filled her with violent anguish. Did he know? Had he learned? She felt the more consternation that, when this silence had lasted several weeks, she

found herself in a hospital, officially treated for a loathsome disease which disfigured her.

This is what had happened:

Once enlisted in his regiment, Guilhem, strong in his deep love and sure of his betrothed, soon made himself remarked as a solid, studious, exemplary soldier. Each day seemed to him to bring him towards Yvraine and their future happiness. His conduct was thenceforth irreproachable. Living only in the letters he received from France, and which filled his heart, Yvraine was there, for him. Absence enhanced her; and under the fair Oriental sky the melancholy of longing seemed still more enchanting, more delicious than in the Breton fields. The joy for him, certain in having her for wife, was experienced in advance, and each day brought it closer. When he passed as post marshal, with the military medal, his proud content was redoubled in writing of it to his dear and worthy little wife! Ah! how through her the words faith, country, honor, home, kept all their virginal intonations — thanks to that pure emotion, thanks to that belief, he had brought from the country! At the crest of the inalterable confidence to which he had arrived, Guilhem, whenever he read phrases in which a word of trouble might

have startled him, made mental demand and reply, and justified everything.

Suppose he had learned the truth suddenly from some one, and that by dint of proof the evidence had made his trust totter, — what black disgust, what horror of life, what collapse! Certainly whoever would have furnished him with those proofs under the pretext "of being truthful" — would he not be as foolish, as detestable, and much less a friend than a murderer? Those brave letters from his honest and pure little Yvraine — were they not for him real happiness in spite of that separation, forced, yet saturated with the hope which was at bottom the greatest good-luck of his life? Was not even that shadow the only happiness possible between them?

Suppose the number he drew had exempted him from service, and that he had married his Yvraine! What a difference! After a short intoxication, as soon as he had perceived the fickle, lazy, coquettish, and dangerous nature of his wife, how many secret tears would he have shed — he who could only conceive of the conjugal bond as sacred! Soon what weariness! What unconquerable old age! What loneliness for both, if his wife's lightness did not bring a tragic ending!

Ah, well! instead of that positive result

from happiness realized, so to speak, his good star predestined him to be only really happy, heaped upon him in those four years and a half a felicity without a cloud, compacted of hope well founded, an illusive absence, and solid remembrances every day renewed! And this, thanks to a falsity mixed with fear, thanks to the pardonable falsity of her whom he did not even suspect! *Pardonable*, do I say? How indeed judge as "culpable" or "innocent" these sorts of natures? As well consider the larks criminal because they cannot resist the mirror-snare.[1]

And if it be objected that this happiness was only the fruit of a lie, it may be replied: That proves only for those who are worthy of it that a God causes good to be born from evil. Besides, in this lower world, what is the happiness which at base is not derived from some lie?

One night, in the early months of this fifth year, Guilhem was awakened by the trumpet. There was an Arab revolt. He leapt to the saddle. They charged. The skirmish was hot; but less than an hour after, the revolt was suppressed.

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[1] [A trap mounted on a pivot and set with little pieces of looking-glass which, exposed to the sun, attract larks and other birds by their brightness. — THE EDITORS.]

As they were returning to the camp, in the starlight, two or three belated cannonades resounded; the balls whistled — and suddenly between the companies, among the horses, a shadowy figure passed. Doubtless some fugitive meaning to avenge a death. As he passed the marshal, and while the latter was lifting his sabre, the Arab flourished his scimitar. The weapon plunged its way through Guilhem's breast, who bent, dying, over his horse's mane, as the wretch disappeared in a stretch of date-palms along the road.

They laid him on a litter, but he made them a sign to stop: he would not arrive alive. All was ended.

The full moon in the vast African sky lighted up the military group. Beholding his life ebbing from moment to moment, those who surrounded him, esteeming and loving him, felt their eyes moisten, and watched him bareheaded.

He drew from his breast a little photograph of his reveered betrothed, whom he should never see again, *but who had sworn to him, if he were killed in the war, to consecrate herself to God!*

Then, as real happiness can be found here below only in oneself, and as, by a miracle, his faith had shielded him from any

scandal, keeping his pure and noble belief intact, he made the sign of the cross. Then, with a face radiant with ecstatic joy, tranquilly, nuptially, touching with his lips the image of Yvraine, he gently expired, with the air of one elect.

UNDER A BUSH OF LILACS

By Jakub Arbes

I AM going to tell a simple story, as simple as the most common every-day occurrence of which men hardly take any notice. I am going to tell of one of those sweet little creatures, every tenth, eighth, or sixth of whom withers away when scarcely entered upon life; of one of those cobwebby organisms often felled to the grave in a night — nay, in a few hours — by a mere breath of a gentle wind; or, again, possessed of such wonderful life-power that for almost a century they are able to withstand the wildest storms. In a word, I shall tell the story of a little child who had passed only the second year of its age; of a child that was noted neither for any bodily beauty nor for any mental abilities, nor distinguished in any way from millions of other children of the same age.

Is that likely to interest anybody? Will the "adventures" of such a little creature

attract any one? Can we speak at all of any "adventures" that would stir the mind of the reader?

Hardly. And yet there are few mortals whose life has been as strange as that of this little baby, who, not having yet any notion of life, is sitting in the thick, high, soft grass under a low bush of lilacs by the churchyard wall, whither it has just come toddling from that hut — its home.

The hot rays of a June sun, nearly setting, play in the most varied hues on the luxuriant grass, here covering it with golden, yellow, or orange colors, there allowing the glittering green to display its various shades, from the shimmering evergreen to a greenish-brown.

For all these and other things the child has no sense; it plays in the grass wholly at random, without any purpose, without thinking; it even seems that it is not playing, that its little soul has not developed sense enough for the most primitive play. It stretches out its little hand for single stalks of grass that are higher than others, or that in some way draw its attention, as though it would pick them, but drops them forthwith. It looks around, and then looks forward or into space, and again it plays with its little hands in the grass, or with one little nail awkwardly

digs the ground; in a word, it attempts to play, not yet knowing how.

It is a plump, light-haired little girl in a short slip with its border bemired, loosened at her throat so that you may see the little sunken, naked breast. The expression of her face is indefinite at first sight, but a certain inexpressibly bitter line around its full lips and the dark-blue, dreamy, and gloomy eyes give the little face the almost painful expression often marking children who have been born in grief and sorrow.

Still it seems that her little soul has not yet been clouded with the least shadow of grief. She looks around so carelessly, so naïvely, that one cannot believe that she yet lives a life different from that which is called animal life.

How differently she would look about if she understood more than a mere child does! How she would enjoy the view into free space, where bluish mountains, surrounding a delightful valley, rise to heaven! How pleased she would be to look where the wooded hills lower gradually like terraces, forming a wonderful amphitheatre, easily to be surveyed from the place where the child stands! How eagerly would she gaze at those far-off hills crossed by a zigzag highway, that now disappears in the woods and

again may be seen looking like a white or yellow thread, or glittering like melting gold in the glowing rays of the sun! And what strange sentiments would fill her heart when she turned to that small field in her immediate neighborhood, enclosed by a low, dilapidated wall, here and there bearing a shrub or a tree, — a country churchyard, with half-sunken graves, most of them without a cross or other memorial sign; a lone country churchyard in a forsaken mountain region seldom visited even by a chance wanderer!

What does this poor child, who has scarcely seen its nearest surroundings, know of the world, of its joys and griefs, its enjoyments and sufferings, its efforts, labors, and struggles? What does this awkward worm in a soiled little dress know of men — those noble creatures said to have been created in God's own image, and of all their excitements and passions? Why! this little girl does not even know that the nearest mountain village — a few miserable huts with inhabitants as poor, nay, even poorer than those huts themselves — lies under the nearest wooded hill, an hour's journey away from the churchyard; she has not the slightest idea that the first church may not be seen until half an hour's journey beyond the

village; she has never dreamed of what the difference is between a charming park, designed for pleasure, and that mysterious place where human hearts are quietly decaying; she does not even know that she is sitting by a churchyard wall, under a bush of lilacs, amid grass that has grown up out of a forgotten grave.

Suddenly a breeze springs up, swings the top of the lilac-bush, and shakes down upon the little blond head a few faded blossoms of the shrub, which in mountainous regions blooms as late as June. Unconsciously the child raises her head. For a moment she looks at the quivering leaves, and then at the trembling branches and the yellowish blossoms.

It seems as though she cannot understand how any such thing is possible — for she looks surprised, amazed, as a plain countryman would look at a clever feat of jugglery incomprehensible to him.

A moment later she slowly lifts up her little hand, as though she were trying if it were possible to reach the branches, the leaves, and the blossoms; then the hand falls slowly down to the stem of the shrub, which she embraces with her little fingers. She seems to feel a firm support. Holding the stem fast, she rises slowly and again lifts up her

hand as though she were going to pick the nearest half-faded blossom.

At least she fixes her dark-blue eyes with great eagerness upon it; but a moment later her fickle gaze again wanders about the churchyard, thoughtlessly, it seems, until it remains fastened on a cottage about thirty paces distant from the shrub — the dwelling of the man who, in this solitude, prepares and guards the last resting-place for the human beings brought hither to moulder into atoms.

It is a miserable hut, built of unburnt bricks and covered with thatch. Two gigantic ash-trees, overshadowing the only window, protect the interior from the scorching heat of the sun. From this cabin, in front of which the child used to play, she has come toddling — for the first time in her life — as far as the churchyard wall, to the bush of lilacs, the only one of its kind in the cemetery.

She looks at the cottage for some time as though she expected some one to come and caress her for behaving so well. But after a few minutes, — which to the child are long, — as no one comes from the hut, she again turns her eyes toward the nearest surroundings, lifts up her head, looks at the nearest flower, and stretches her little hand to reach it. But the blossom is a little too high; she

strives to catch at it, but her grasp is too short — about half the thickness of her little finger too short. If she would stand on her tiptoes she would reach the whole branch, but she does not know how to stand on tiptoe.

Happily for her, a fresh gust of wind, fiercer and colder than the first, bent the top of the lilac-bush so low that a blossom, growing on a different branch, however, and not the one the child was longing for, slipped by chance into her hand.

A joyous smile plays about her lips. She holds the blossom in her little hand, apparently not knowing what to do with it. Either she does not know that it may be plucked, or she lacks the strength; for a time she stands motionless.

Suddenly there rushes out of the door of the cottage a young woman in a plain but neat house-dress. She looks shyly around about the fields and the graveyard, as though she were seeking some one. In the next moment she finds the one; her eye discerns the child under the bush of lilacs.

"Marushka, Marushka!" she cries out. "Where are you?"

At the first outcry the child staggers back, and the lilac-blossom is caught in her hand.

"Mamma! mamma!" the child lisps in

answer to the call, in that sweet, childish tone which an adult can never faithfully imitate.

Now for the first time does the young woman realize in what place her child is standing. A strange blaze flashes from her dark eyes, betraying fright and horror.

"Jesu Maria!" she moans in pain; and as quickly as a hawk falling on its prey she speeds along and over the graves to her child, crying anxiously, "Marushka, my dear, poor, unhappy Marushka!"

The child looks at her mother with a sweet smile, as though she knew her mother came to fondle her. She keeps the plucked lilac-blossom in her little hand, as though she were showing it to her mother; and when the mother comes nearer she puts the blossom into her mouth and stretches out her arms.

The mother is almost out of breath. She pulls the blossom at once from the child's mouth, and taking her to her arms presses the little creature to her breast.

"Oh, my God!" she laments in a trembling voice. "Marushka, my dear Marushka, where have you been? Why, why did I leave you alone a moment unwatched?"

But the child smiles playfully. She does not understand her mother's words or their dark meaning.

As quickly as she has come, the mother hastens with her little one to the cabin. Her face is purple, her eyes glittering, and her heart throbbing.

"Oh, God! my God!" she wails. "I would not have thought that the parson's prophecy would be fulfilled this very day — the anniversary day. Oh! why did I not watch you as I had done before — my dear, my only Marushka?"

The playful child only smiles. At times she tries to say something; but even the mother fails to understand what she prattles.

The frightened mother has reached the hut; she rushes in, slams the door, and puts the child into the cradle.

She reaches out her hands to her mother and smiles fixedly. The mother soothes her.

"Sleep, sleep, my darling!" she mutters, rocking her.

She rocks her long; the child cannot fall asleep, but is lulled at last.

The mother's eyes are suffused with tears. Every now and then she bends over the child, listening to its breath or feeling if its brow be not hot. Still the child smiles, even in its sleep.

The sun has set, and the shadows of evening have spread over the graveyard. The mother is still sitting by the cradle watching

her only child. Now and then she utters disconnected words disclosing her fear and anxiety. At last peace returns to her soul. The child is breathing quietly; there is nothing to justify the mother's fears. And finally the mother lies down on her simple bed and falls asleep.

* * *

Midnight has come.

The yellowish moonbeams, penetrating through the dense foliage of the shady ash-trees that stand before the window, picture on the floor in front of the cradle a few silvery silhouettes — faint, feeble images.

In the room there is a deep silence interrupted only by the breath of two human beings — the mother's breath, full and apparently free, but occasionally shortened as in anxiety, and the delicate breath of the child, a breath alarmingly quickened.

The mother's breath suddenly stops; then a deep sigh follows, and a half-suppressed groan, as she awakes from a troublesome dream, sits up, and fastens her eyes upon the cradle and the child.

The child lies on its back; a faint reflex of the scattered rays of the moon falls directly upon the baby face; the eyes are shut. To the mother the face looks deadly pale. She leaps to the cradle and puts her hand on the

child's forehead; it is hot. The mother bends lower; she feels a hot breath which she thinks to be the breath of death.

She would cry out in pain, but she cannot. Her breath is stopped; the word dies on the trembling lips. Unutterable anxiety brings the cold sweat upon her brow; the blood rushes violently to her heart and back to her head; the arteries are beating more and more wildly; her head is dizzy.

How gladly she would press the child to her heart; how gladly she would kiss death away from the pale lips! and yet there she stands helpless, bent over the cradle as if benumbed.

Only a mother who, in feverish excitement, has spent a sleepless night by the cradle of a sick child will understand the state of this woman's mind. Before her mental sight there passes, in wild chaos, one picture after another, each one more terrible, more threatening and darker than the one before, until at last the most dreadful of all appears on the scene:

She sees a man with the stern features of a zealot, with a cold and yet expressive face, — the parson. Two years ago he had come to sprinkle the grave of a rich farmer with holy water and say a prayer at his coffin, and on that occasion he also came under the thatched

roof of the gravedigger's house to baptize a new-born child — a poor, unfortunate creature.

With fear and shame the youthful mother approached the priest. Her eyes met the austere, gloomy look of the shepherd of souls; she shivered. And to this day it seems to her as though she distinctly heard his reproachful voice:

"God be merciful to you, unhappy daughter. May he be merciful to your child also, whose sinful father will not, cannot, escape eternal damnation."

The words overwhelmed her; she staggered. Even to-day — after more than two years — the mere recollection pierces her heart.

She seems again to hear what the priest said after the baptism:

"Follow my advice, erring daughter. Guard your child as your eye, and beware lest you should, in its presence, utter any word to remind it of the condemned father. Never speak a word to your child of the life, the death, or the grave of that wicked man, and take care lest the unhappy child should approach the unhallowed grave in which the bones of its villanous father are mouldering. Its vapors shall ever be a pestilential breath for your child; every flower, every blade of

grass, every leaf that sprouts from that grave, every grain of dust the wind blows off that grave, shall be pernicious to your child."

For two years did the unfortunate mother heed the warning of the priest, never speaking a single word to her child about its father; for two years she had guarded it as her eye, and taken care that the child should not approach the unholy grave. And to-day, on the anniversary day of the death of the wretched father, — to-day that happened which never should have happened: the child went to the grave, played in the grass, plucked a fading blossom of lilac, and held it in its mouth. And now it is feverish; its breath is hot; the face ghostly pale in the reflection of the moonlight. Is not the prophecy of the "pestilential breath" being fulfilled?

* * *

Long stands the poor mother by the cradle motionless, as if stupefied. The child is breathing at the same quick rate; its breath is as hot as before; and yet it slumbers on as though it felt no pain.

At last the mother moves. Her eyes, which have been fixed upon the face of the sleeping child, glide to the window, through which a broad stream of moonlight is flooding the poor room. Quietly and cautiously,

fearing lest she might awaken the child, with a throbbing heart she steps from the cradle and goes to the open window, through which not only the moonbeams, but also the balsamic fragrance of a summer night, pour in, and, leaning against the wall, she looks out through the window.

In the grayish silvery moonshine she sees a row of graves, crosses and trees, bushes and flowers, and the old wall, to which the moonlight seems to give a faint hue of malachite.

From the dilapidated wall her eyes suddenly fall lower to that ominous bush of lilacs upon whose top and main bough and many branches, standing in the full light, the moonshine plays in manifold shades of molten silver. Yet even this glorified bush awakens gloomy, bitter reminiscences in the soul of the poor mother, the most bitter thoughts that ever stirred a mother's soul; for it seems to her as though she saw before that bush the tall figure of a strong young man in the uniform of a foreign soldier standing upright. His sunburnt face, full of vigor, shows traces of violent, indomitable passions, but is, nevertheless, manly and well-favored. The thick blond hair, the deep-blue eyes, full lips, and an indescribable expression of haughty defiance make the face appear seemly. It has lived thus in the memory of the unfortunate

mother for three years, and just now it rises before her mental sight with an unusual vividness, as clearly and plastically as when, from the same window that she is now looking through, she saw him for the first time, in the scorching heat of the sun, standing at the bush of lilacs under which gaped an open grave.

Her own father, old, sick unto death, had dug that grave on a fatal day. He was hardly able to crawl to the grave and back to the house. He fell at the threshold of the cottage; and the daughter, his only child, wept for hours at the bed of her dying father.

And just in the moment of her greatest distress the first reports of guns were heard in the neighborhood of the cemetery. The enemy had broken in through the mountain passes, advanced, and fought the first skirmish with the advance-guard. But the fight lasted only a few minutes. A few shotguns sounded. The hostile army advanced again, and its vanguard took possession of the fields adjoining the burying-ground. One man appeared in the churchyard — the foremost sentinel.

The young mother sees him to-day as vividly as she saw him on that fatal day; she sees how he deserts his post at the bush of

lilacs, how he comes nearer, how he enters the cabin.

Oh, no, no! She cannot think further what the dim eye of the dying father had seen.

* * *

Punishment instantly followed the accursed deed.

And once more she sees that blond-haired young man standing by the lilac-bush and the gaping grave. A little farther off stand several soldiers with their rifles aimed, and an officer who had witnessed his act.

She sees *him* standing boldly facing death. He tries to speak, but at the same moment the guns are discharged. She did not see what followed: the dreadful man had fallen into the open grave.

When she had recovered from her swoon, she had found only the cold body of her old father, the graveyard lonely as ever, and a fresh grave under the bush of lilacs.

And now it seems to her as though again she saw that fearful man standing at the ill-fated bush of lilacs; yet his face no longer wears an expression of stubborn defiance, but an indescribable expression of silent yet eloquent entreaty for mercy and forgiveness.

"Forgiveness? — forgive you?" slipped

from the closed lips of the unhappy mother. "No, no; I cannot! Not even for the salvation of my soul — not for the" —

She did not finish. The child stirred suddenly in the cradle, and a prolonged sigh escaped from its throbbing bosom.

Quick as an arrow, the mother springs to the cradle and anxiously looks into the sweet face of her little child. How wonderful! Even this tiny tender face, formerly ever full of smiles and now deadly pale, seems to express a silent, but urgent entreaty.

"Forgive — forget?" laments the mother, vexed by her fears. "No! No! — And yet!"

She stands mute awhile. Her breast heaves; hot tears steal to her eyes.

"Yet — I must — to save my child," she whispers as in a dream; and then suddenly bending forward she takes the child from the cradle into her arms, and pressing it to her heart she prays:

"O God, only save my little angel from the baneful breath! I forgive — all."

Here the child cries out; but from its opening eyes new life gleams, and a smile plays about the lips.

The mother shouts with joy. She runs to the window. The east begins to blush with the first flush of dawn. The gleam shines in

through the window; and in the rosy glow it seems to the mother that her little angel's cheeks are as bright as they were before the poisonous vapor of the father's grave touched them.

* * *

From that night the ill-starred mother loved her child more devotedly than ever; she guarded her daughter as she would her eye; but she no longer kept her away from the "cursed" grave. Oftentimes the child played on the mound under the lilac-bush, where were decaying the bones of a man without whose sin she would not have seen the light of day.

Later, when she shall have grown up into maidenhood, she will spend many an hour in melancholy dreams under that ill-fated bush of lilacs, and perhaps she will think of her father with bitterness, or perhaps she will willingly pluck from the shrub a little twig with a fresh blossom, and pinning it to her bosom will kneel down at the grave without rebuke, without bitterness, and will forgive as her mother has forgiven.

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